

The Middle East in Transatlantic Politics 2003 – 2009

Why European and American Policies Towards Middle East Issues Converge and Diverge Despite Agreement on Common Goals

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To The Soul of My Great Mother

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Introduction

The crisis that was caused by the Anglo-American invasion in Iraq in March 2003 has demonstrated that there is a deep split in foreign policy positions between the United States and some states of the European Union, as well as a deep rift among the EU's member states. This explains the emergence of debates, such the one about "old" and "new" Europe, and about new threats and appropriate responses to them. While "pessimists" believe that there are deep-rooted splits that may change the nature of transatlantic relations from cooperation to conflict, "optimists" argue that there are common "values and intensive interactions" which make cooperation "inevitable."¹

While the transatlantic relationship may be the most powerful and successful alliance history has witnessed, no relationship is totally immune. Given that the Middle East is a major source of contention between Europe and the United States, this study examines the reasons for divergences and convergences among the transatlantic allies regarding Middle East issues. It also examines the perceptions of Arab officials and academic experts regarding transatlantic policies in the Middle East. In other words, the study attempts to read the strategic logic behind the transatlantic allies' orientations through which the tools of action are determined. The study examines the transatlantic strategies, interests, perceptions and priorities in the Middle East. In addition, according to the strategic orientations of the transatlantic policies, three case studies, the Iraq crisis, the Iranian nuclear dilemma, and the Palestinian-Israeli conflict, are to be addressed in detail. Furthermore, the study sheds light on the Arab perceptions of the transatlantic policies in the Middle East through personal interviews with academics, politicians, diplomats, and journalists in two Arab states (Egypt and Jordan).

The study is based on two main arguments: The first is that transatlantic divergences with respect to the Middle East are in details (tools), but not in the essence of policies. In a sense, Americans and Europeans share the same fundamental objectives; preventing proliferation of mass destructions, fighting terrorism; and promoting human rights and democratic reform, but they differ in their preferred tactics for achieving their goals. The second is that transatlantic

¹ Henning Riecke, "Making the Best of Difference: A New Start for Transatlantic Relations," *International Journal* LIX, no.1 (2003-2004): 2-3. The debate about old and new Europe was embarked by the American Secretary of Defense Donald Rumsfeld when he was distinguishing between the old Europe (France and Germany) that opposed the Iraq war, and the new Europe (Britain, Spain, Italy, Netherland, and most of the new EU member states) that championed the American invasion to Iraq.

convergences regarding the Middle East make the policies of the alliance more coherent. In a sense, when the Americans and Europeans get along with each other concerning any issue in the Middle East, more solid and articulated positions manifest themselves.

▪ **Project's Scope and Objectives:**

This study aims at addressing the reasons for convergences and divergences in American and European policies towards Middle East issues. Within this scope, it focuses on analyzing the relationship between (the EU and some of its most influential members such as France, UK, Germany, Italy, and Spain), and the USA from 2003 until 2009. The year 2003 witnessed the highest degree of tension between Europe and USA since the Bush administration took the office in 2001. The major bone of contention between the transatlantic allies was the Middle East. Transatlantic divergences reached its peak with the split over the Iraq war in 2003. The study stops at the end of 2009 sufficient to evaluate the Middle East policy of both the Bush administration and the first year of the Obama administration. One may ask, what the unit of analysis in studying European positions towards the Middle East issues is- is it the EU institutions or rather the national institutions of the member states? The research usually focuses on the EU as an institution in illustrating the transatlantic priorities and strategies while this study examines the national positions of the big European member states.

Historically, the United States and Europe have embraced different policies towards the Middle East. However, transatlantic allies shared the same vision when it came to the big picture in the Middle East, to their interests or their security, and they hold the same opinion that the absence of "democracy and modernization" in the Middle East jeopardizes their "regional and international security."² Therefore, the transatlantic allies share the same concerns about the Middle East, but they are at variance when it comes to the proper technique to address these concerns:

The greater Middle East is beset by a crescent of crises, ranging from Israel to Lebanon and Syria to Iraq. The greater Middle East is also facing similar problems and challenges, like weapons proliferation, the lack of democracy, rampant population growth, terrorism, strategic threats and economic stagnation. While Americans and Europeans tend to agree that these issues are important, there is a little transatlantic agreement on how to approach any of them.³

² Ivo Daalder, Nicole Gnesotto, and Philip Gordon, "America, Europe and the Crescent of Crisis," in: *Crescent of Crisis: US- European strategy for the Greater Middle East*, eds. Ivo Daalder, et.al. (Washington D.C: Brookings Institution Press, 2006), 1.

³ Ibid., 3.

This study defines the Middle East as including the Arab countries plus Turkey, Iran and Israel. The Iraqi question presented a new start for transatlantic relations and the Middle East. It has been argued that the Iraq crisis was a logical outcome of the existing unipolar system, dominated by the United States as a hyper power. The Iraq crisis was also being portrayed as the first precedent of a deep and severe rift in the transatlantic relations. Therefore, The study examines the Iraqi question as a key to understand the evolution of transatlantic policies in the Middle East; the Iranian nuclear program as a case for transatlantic convergence and divergence, and the Palestinian Israeli conflict as a model of the US as a leader and the EU as a follower, albeit with different perceptions.

The research does not address all the details of the case studies but focuses on specific issues within them. As for the Iraqi case, the study addresses the American and European positions with respect to the decision of war against Iraq, followed by the post-combat phase that combined the political and reconstruction processes, troops training, and the international resolutions. As for the Iranian case, the focus is mainly on the Iranian nuclear program and the transatlantic policies to dissuade Iran from becoming a nuclear state. The study of the Palestinian-Israeli conflict is confined to the transatlantic positions towards the peace process, Hamas, and the Gaza war. On a theoretical level, this study explains the phenomenon of divergence and convergence in transatlantic policies, as reflected in the Middle East region. On a practical level, it sheds light on the most influential powers affecting the Middle East region. Therefore, the study hopefully enables analysts to detect the general attitudes of transatlantic allies' policies, through which the region may be re-shaped or stabilized in the future.

▪ **Research Problem and State of the Art:**

Despite their long history of cooperation and alliance since World War II and their agreement on a common agenda towards the Middle East, the United States and the European countries have not behaved in a coherent way recently. It is known that transatlantic history is full of crises; however these crises have never led to a collapse of the transatlantic relations. On the contrary, once transatlantic allies overcame the aspects of divergence, they tended to renew their efforts to get their relations back on track. It has been argued that the Iraq crisis created an unprecedented split in transatlantic relations. Yet, such a split was derived mainly from the

transatlantic differences in the strategic attitudes with respect to the Middle East as well as their differences in tools of action, even if they shared convergent goals.

In addition, the contemporary international system has led to broader divergences within transatlantic relations because the global dominance has been shifted from a bi-polar to a unipolar moment anchored in the United States as the sole unipolar power. Also, the empowerment of the neoconservatives in the United States following George W. Bush's election in 2000 and the events September 11, 2001, have led to deep-rooted changes in American foreign policy towards unilateralism in addressing international affairs.⁴ This trend stood in extreme contradiction with the multilateralism of the international system and the great importance of the international organizations and treaties the EU has always embraced. Hence, despite the fact that they have common goals towards Middle East issues, the transatlantic allies converge and diverge in their policies and tools of actions. Therefore, there is a need to explain the reasons behind the convergences and divergences in the transatlantic policies towards Middle East issues, which this study will achieve through a number of case studies. The principal question is: Why do European and American policies converge and diverge towards Middle East issues despite their agreement on common goals? This question is divided into a number of sub-questions, which are as follows:

- What are the American and European strategies and priorities towards Middle East issues?
- What are the points of convergence and divergence in transatlantic relations regarding Iraq, Iran, and the Israeli-Palestinian conflict?
- What is the actual behavior of transatlantic allies towards Iraq, Iran, and the Israeli-Palestinian conflict?
- How do Arab officials and experts perceive the transatlantic policies towards the Middle East?

To answer the first sub-question the study endeavors to illustrate the strategies and priorities of the EU as an institution compared with those of the United States, while the second and the third sub-questions analyze the position of the EU as an institution as well as the positions of some of the big member states in the Union. In addition, the study introduces

⁴ Neoconservatives represent an ideological stream in US politics that emerged in the Reagan era and calls for the utility of military power, unilateralism, the disdain of the international institutions, and the superiority of the United States as the sole super power. The "neo-cons" have dominated the United States' political discourse since they reached the White House with the Bush administration.

specific standards, on which a comparison may be based between the positions of both sides as well as specifications for the reasons for convergences and divergences in each case study. These standards are strategies, priorities, tools (particularly the use of power in international relations), and the international law and legitimacy.

The research problem reveals a number of independent and dependent variables.

The independent variables:

- Evolutions in the structure of the international system: from the bipolar to the unipolar system and the events of September 11.
- Internal evolutions within the USA and the EU: the emergence of the neoconservatives in the US and the changing governments in Europe.
- American and European strategic attitudes towards the Middle East.

The dependent variable: American and European policies towards Middle East issues: their actual behavior in the case studies (Iraq, Iran, and the Palestinian-Israeli conflict), and their tools of actions.

Founded on the key research question and the sub-questions, the dissertation is divided into two parts. The first concentrates on transatlantic policies towards Middle East issues by scrutinizing transatlantic relations' theoretical frameworks. In addition, the dissertation reads the logic behind transatlantic strategies and priorities in Middle East. Moreover, the dissertation examines in detail transatlantic policies towards three case studies (Iraq war, Iranian nuclear crisis, and the Palestinian-Israeli conflict). The second part revolves around the Arab elite perspective towards transatlantic policies in the Middle East, through personal interviews with a random sample of Arab pundits in both Egypt and Jordan. Based on a questionnaire and statistical and analytical examination of the interview partners' answers, a linkage between Arab perception's findings and dissertation's theoretical framework and the findings of the first part is included. A final conclusion attempts to answer both the sub-questions and the major question and verifies the main arguments of the study.

In a review of the most recent studies on transatlantic relations, one shed light on the challenges the transatlantic allies are facing: "terrorism, proliferation of weapons of mass destructions, the control of sensitive technology and weak and failing states." While the study addresses the chief concern of divergence between Europe and the United States (the Iraqi crisis), it also posed the question whether these transatlantic "differences could be turned into an

asset for the future” or not.⁵ Another study provided us with possible “scenarios” of the transatlantic policies in the Middle East: It argued that the future of the transatlantic policies in the Middle East is hinged on the changes of “the region itself, US attitudes toward the world and the developments within the EU as an international actor.”⁶

On the other hand, transatlantic relations were being analyzed in terms of a continuum of cooperation and conflict: One trend stated that transatlantic relations are severely divided, and the Iraq crisis seemed to confirm Robert Kagan's view that "when it comes to setting national priorities, determining threats, defining challenges and implementing foreign and defence policies the US and Europe have parted a way."⁷ This trend argued that the transatlantic rifts can be explicated by three rationales: "American power, 9/11, and the Bush doctrine". To illustrate: a powerful America incites its citizens to think that they do not need their European allies anymore and that they can achieve their interests by going it alone. In addition, the attacks on the twin towers caused an American "sense of vulnerability" that urged the United States to resort mainly to its "military actions" at the expense of the transatlantic alliance. Furthermore, the Bush administration's agenda of being the sole and hegemonic superpower anchored chiefly in its military power extremely provoked Europe and gave it a license to pursue its own vision apart from the United States. Another trend states that Americans in general should care about cooperation with other countries. One of the lessons drawn from Iraq was that even though the US can in fact conduct the military phase of the operation on its own, it is difficult to conduct the post-war phase that way.⁸ Another study explained the rift in transatlantic relations in terms of an increasing “ideological gap” between the United States and Europe, particularly on the “use of force and international institutions.”⁹ In brief, most debates revolved around the extent of conflict and cooperation in transatlantic relations. The proposed study puts more emphasis on such cooperation and conflict regarding the Middle East. In addition, the study covers the

⁵ David G. Haglund and Joseph T. Jockel eds., “Weathering the Dust Storm: Transatlantic Relations after the Iraq War,” *International Journal* LIX, no.1 (2003-2004).

⁶ Nicole Gnesotto, et.al, *Shift or Rift: Assessing EU-US Relations after Iraq*, ed. Lindstrom Gustav (Paris: European Union, Institute for Security Studies 2003).

⁷ Robert Kagan, *Of Paradise and Power: America and Europe in the New World Order* (New York: Alfred. Knopf, 2003).

⁸ Daniel S. Hamilton, ed., *Conflict and Cooperation in Transatlantic Relations* (Washington, D.C: Center for Transatlantic Relations, 2004).

⁹ Emily Meyer, “Estranged: Transatlantic Relations in the 21 st Century,” (Florida State University, Social Sciences, International Affairs, Spring 2005).

perceptions of Arab officials and academic experts regarding transatlantic policies in the Middle East.

▪ **Methodology, Research Statement, and Sources**

At the outset, there is no single approach that can address all the dimensions of transatlantic relations after the Cold War. This argument is based on the fact that transatlantic relations are complex and multilayered. While a number of analysts argued that the foundations of the transatlantic cooperation collapsed at the end of the Cold War, others contended that the very foundations of transatlantic cooperation are yet functioning. A third attitude maintained that despite the materialization of dangerous splits within the transatlantic relations; they still could be addressed and even contained. Therefore, there are different perspectives for the prototype of transatlantic relations after the end of the Cold War. This study employs three perspectives as tools to understand transatlantic relations after the Cold War: neo-realism, neo-liberalism, and constructivism.¹⁰

Two interrelated tracks can be distinguished in transatlantic relations: the “cooperation track” supported by the liberal approach, and the “competition track” supported by the realistic approach. This study will be based on a multidimensional approach. This approach combines the neo-realistic, neo-liberalist, and the constructivist perspectives to explain the reasons for transatlantic convergences and divergences in respect to Middle East issues. Even though each approach provides a different and competitive explanation for foreign policy, the study aims at analyzing which approach is more appropriate for explaining transatlantic policies in the Middle East case studies.

The neo-realistic approach explains the evolutions that have taken place in the structure of the international system, which affected transatlantic relations, particularly the transatlantic policies towards Middle East issues. It can also explain the new American strategy after September 11 and the emergence of the neoconservatives to use force in international relations and to act unilaterally. Such American tendencies were rebuffed by the European Union, and this rejection was even strategically expressed in the new European Security Strategy on 12 December 2003, which was partly a response to the new American Security Strategy of 17 September 2002. The neo-liberal approach, on the other hand, explains another tendency of both

¹⁰ I am mainly drawing on John S. Duffield, "Transatlantic Relations after the Cold War: Theory, Evidence, and the Future," *International Studies Perspectives* 2, no. 1 (2001): 93-95.

the U.S.A. and the EU: When there is a rift or differences in interests, both partners try to understand each other's interests and to pave the way to heal the rift. It also sheds light on the domestic determinants in both the United States and the European Union. As for the constructivist approach, it gives further substance to the values and identities that may affect the foreign policies of both the United States and the European Union.

The Middle East is a region of crises, challenges, and threats to transatlantic security. Although the United States and Europe share threats coming from Middle East, such as terrorism, weapons of mass destruction, and rogue states, they differ about the way they perceive them and the way to react appropriately and efficiently. This difference was not only exemplified by different national security strategies but also by different policies. The key question of this dissertation is why European and American policies converge and diverge towards Middle East issues, despite their agreement on common goals such as promoting democracy, solving the Middle East Peace Process, and preventing the spread of weapons of mass destructions.

More accurately, this dissertation seeks to explain the reasons for the divergences and convergences that have taken place in American and European policies regarding the Middle East, particularly with respect to Iraq, Iran, and the Palestinian-Israeli conflict. First, this will be accomplished through reviewing some theoretical perspectives that have been employed to analyze and explain the differences and agreements between the transatlantic allies, particularly regarding the Middle East. Second, this dissertation analyzes the points of convergence and divergence in US and European strategies, interests, priorities, and perceptions towards the Middle East. Third, this study examines in detail the reasons for transatlantic divergences and convergences through three case studies. Last, this dissertation seeks to understand the Arab perceptions regarding transatlantic policies in the Middle East.

In fact, there is no one intrinsic theoretical perspective in itself, but the value of any perspective lies in its explanatory power. That is the reason why the dissertation has taken a mixed approach of the three perspectives mentioned above (neo-realism, neo-liberalism, and constructivism). This is an endeavor to improve our understanding of what can be better explained by theory x and what can be better explained by theory xx. In other words, there is no winning perspective but instead a winning explanation. One insight throughout the earlier studies which have been conducted on the questions of this dissertation was that some questions have not been yet answered and some perspectives were missing. One of these missing perspectives

was the Arab's point of view on whether the West was united or split. In other words, how do officials and academic experts in the Middle East perceive the transatlantic convergences and divergences with respect their region. Hence, the dissertation chose two Middle Eastern countries (Egypt and Jordan) as case studies to conduct interviews with officials, academics, journalists, and diplomats. Other than that, the sources of this dissertation consist of books, theses, journals, periodicals, policy papers, documents, and electronic sites.

▪ **Plan of the Thesis:**

This thesis is divided into two parts. Part one examines transatlantic policies towards Middle East issues. It draws on the relevant theoretical perspectives and existing explanations that can assist in understanding the transatlantic relations. In addition, It compares transatlantic strategies and priorities in Middle East to evaluate the convergences and divergences of the American and the European perspectives towards this region. Moreover, based on a multidimensional approach that combines neo-realist, neo-liberalist, and constructivist premises, part one conducts an in-depth analysis of three case studies (the Iraq crisis, the Iranian nuclear dilemma, and the Israeli-Palestinian conflict) to explain the reasons behind the transatlantic convergences and divergences in each case study. In its second part the thesis aims to break new ground in understanding the Arab perception towards the transatlantic conduct in the Middle East. This part examines the Arab elite perception of transatlantic policies towards the Middle East through 46 personal interviews with random selected Arab interview partners in both Egypt and Jordan.

Part one consists of five chapters, the first of which examines the theoretical framework of transatlantic relations by drawing on three major theoretical perspectives: neo-realism, neo-liberalism, and constructivism. Here I show that these three perspectives were being used to explain the state of transatlantic relations after the Cold War in general and that each has its own validity in explaining transatlantic policies towards the Middle East in particular. In addition, based on a selection of scholarly writings, this chapter illustrates that academics scrutinizing transatlantic relations can be divided into a pessimistic and an optimistic group. The pessimists claimed that there were severe transatlantic splits, whereas the optimists maintained that the transatlantic alliance was stable and capable of mending its rifts. Moreover, this chapter shows that there were other alternative explanations, which mainly combined more than one theoretical perspective to explain transatlantic relations. Furthermore, this chapter draws on the significance

of the multi-dimensional approach that combines neo-realist, neo-liberal, and constructivist premises to explain transatlantic divergences and convergences towards Middle East issues.

Chapter two concentrates on the American and European strategies and priorities towards Middle East issues to help structure their convergences and divergences in the subsequent analytical investigation of the three case studies. In doing so, I examined the historical legacy of both Europe and the United States in the Middle East which showed that the region has been – and still is – a principal basis for transatlantic convergences and divergences and ups and downs. In addition, I compared the American National Security Strategy of 2002 and its revised version of 2006 and the European Security Strategy of 2003 which shaped the developments of the transatlantic policies towards Middle East issues. This comparison showed that although the transatlantic partners converged over their common interests in the Middle East, they diverged over their perception of threats, tools of actions, and priorities.

Chapter three places transatlantic policies towards Middle East issues in an in-depth analytical context through explaining the reasons behind transatlantic policies regarding the Iraq crisis. I divided the Iraq crisis into three phases: the pre-war phase 2001-2002, which witnessed growing transatlantic divergences; the war phase 2002-2003 which was characterized by a great split; and the post-war phase 2003-2009, which witnessed a pragmatic transatlantic convergence. Based on neo-realist, neo-liberal, and constructivist premises, this chapter demonstrates the reasons behind the transatlantic divergence over the Iraq war in 2003. In addition, based on neo-realist and neo-liberal assumptions, this chapter explains the reasons behind the transatlantic convergence over Iraq in the post-war phase. The chapter shows that the Iraq war was a war of choice for Europe and a war of necessity for the Bush administration.

Chapter four analyses the transatlantic conduct in the Iranian nuclear crisis. I investigate the divergent transatlantic historical experience with Iran as a lead up to understand transatlantic policies towards the Iranian nuclear crisis. I divided the Iranian crisis into two phases: In phase one from 2002 to 2005 transatlantic policies were convergent over interests but divergent over the appropriate tools of action; phase two from 2005 to 2009 underscored pragmatic transatlantic convergence over Iran. Anchored in neo-realist, neo-liberal, and constructivist hypotheses, the chapter demonstrates the reasons behind the transatlantic divergence over Iran in phase one. In addition, based on neo-realist and neo-liberal assumptions, the chapter explains the reasons behind the pragmatic transatlantic convergence over Iran in phase two. This chapter

demonstrates that transatlantic policies towards the Iranian crisis witnessed in its first phase a soft divergence and in its second phase a solid convergence; they even witnessed a further principled convergence with the Obama administration.

Chapter five examines the transatlantic performance in the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. I maintain that transatlantic policies in this conflict witnessed a leader-follower pattern even though both Europe and the United States had divergent perceptions. In doing so, this chapter demonstrates that this pattern was historically consolidated in the aftermath of the World War II. In addition, transatlantic policies towards the conflict were divided into three phases in the period of study. In the first phase from 2000 to 2005, the Bush administration was disengaged at the core and Europe was involved at the margin. In other words, the United States was reluctant to robustly engage in the conflict even if it was rhetorically engaged and Europe was involved at the margin because of its participation in the Quartet and the Gaza disengagement under American consent. In the second phase from 2006 to 2008, a greater transatlantic convergence materialized in the aftermath of Hamas's victory in the Palestinian parliamentary elections in 2006 and the Palestinian division in 2007. In the third phase in 2009, a further transatlantic convergence materialized with the Obama administration's new aggressive engagement towards the conflict. Drawing on the above-mentioned theoretical premises this chapter explains the reasons behind transatlantic policies towards the conflict in the three distinct phases.

Part two of the thesis consists of two chapters that analyze Arab elite perceptions of transatlantic policies towards the Middle East. The two chapters are built on interviews I conducted with 46 academics, politicians, diplomats, and journalists from both Egypt and Jordan. I conducted 26 interviews in Egypt and 20 interviews in Jordan as a random sample to investigate the general attitudes of the Arab pundits towards transatlantic policies in the Middle East. These two chapters link the Arab perception to some of the theories of the thesis and the findings of the first part.

Chapter six, built on the answers to the questionnaires, maintains that there were different and sometimes cynical Arab insights into the transatlantic policies and actions in the Middle East. This chapter explores why the Arab interview partners perceived the eight years of the Bush administration's policies in Middle East as very negative and aggressive and why they perceived the European policies as negative with some positive insights, subordinated to the United States, and generally ineffective. In addition, the chapter uses statistical and political

analysis to figure out how the Arabs conceive the state of transatlantic relations – whether in convergence or in divergence. This chapter illustrates that the Arab pundits conceived the overall transatlantic relationship as more convergent with superficial divergences. Moreover, I draw attention to the continuity and change in Bush’s first and second term through the eyes of the Arab interview partners. Furthermore, I investigate one of the thesis’ two arguments from an Arabic perspective: whether transatlantic divergences over the Middle East are over tools, or interests, or over both. Last, I scrutinize the consequences of the domestic changes within both Europe and the United States for their policies towards Middle East from an Arab angle.

Chapter Seven, built on the answers of the interview partners, concentrates on how they conceive the transatlantic conduct in the three case studies addressed in the first part of the thesis. This links the findings of the first part of the thesis to the Arab perception of those three case studies. In addition, the chapter explores how the Arab interview partners perceived the Obama administration’s performance in 2009 and classifies the Arab perceptions towards transatlantic policies according to four Arab conventional views: a full transatlantic convergence, transatlantic competition, transatlantic balance of interests, and a divided Europe. The chapter maintains that the Arab pundits gave more weight to the transatlantic balance of interests but the other three outlooks also had their proponents in the Arab mind. Finally, the chapter compares the Egyptian and the Jordanian interview partners’ perceptions of all the items mentioned above as a means to scrutinize how each country perceived the transatlantic policies separately and to interpret the reasons behind any sort of variance.

The conclusion of this thesis reviews the two central arguments and findings of the study and reflects on the answers to the key question and sub-questions of the study. Here, I depend on the theoretical premises, transatlantic strategies, priorities, perceptions, and the explanations of the three case studies to answer the research question of the study. In addition, I incorporate the findings of the second part (Arab perception) in the first part (transatlantic policies in Middle East issues) whether theoretically or objectively. Here, the Arab interview partners relied heavily on realist premises in their explanations to transatlantic policies whereas the thesis relied equally on three theoretical approaches. Last, I draw some conclusions on how the West perceives transatlantic policies in comparison to the Arab interview partners.

Part One:

Transatlantic Policies towards Middle East Issues:

Transatlantic Theories

Transatlantic Strategies and Priorities

Three Case Studies:

Iraq War

Iranian Nuclear Crisis

Palestinian-Israeli Conflict

Chapter One:

No Intrinsic Approach in Itself, But in Its Explanatory Power:

Transatlantic Relation's Theoretical Frameworks

The theoretical frameworks provided by realism, liberalism and constructivism are helpful in assessing the nature of [transatlantic crisis] circumstantial and structural causes. They provide a framework that contributes to a more comprehensive and contextualized understanding of the transatlantic crisis.

Forsberg Tuomas & Graeme P. Herd

▪ Introduction:

It is argued that each theoretical framework whether realism, liberalism or constructivism provides certain ideas that can be held together and function in consistency to explain the state of transatlantic relations. For the realist theory, the asymmetry of military power and differing "strategic interests" can partly explain the split between transatlantic allies. Liberalism dwells on "institutions" and "shared values" to partly illustrate persistence of transatlantic convergences and gives the domestic interests greater significance. Whereas constructivist theory sheds more light on "the beliefs and cultures" to explain that the United States and Europe actual behavior is a direct result of the historical culture which both the leaders and the masses have in their minds about the other states and peoples.¹¹

Despite the crises that transatlantic relations have been witnessing for many decades, academic studies have concentrated mainly on analyzing the empirical and the actual policies of the U.S. and its European allies. In other words, theoretical perspectives were not paid much attention to in examining the state of transatlantic relations. However, recent developments have indicated growing divergences between the transatlantic allies such as the Kyoto Protocol, the International Criminal Court, and the Missile Defence system, but most importantly, the Iraq crisis in 2003. These growing divergences have prompted scholars to pay more attention to theorize the state of transatlantic relations. This chapter firstly reviews three major theoretical perspectives: neo-realism, neo-liberalism, and constructivism. Secondly, it differentiates between the pessimist and the optimist schools in the theory of transatlantic relations. For the pessimists, the chapter addresses the writings of Robert Kagan, Philip Gordon & Jeremy Shapiro, William C. Wohlforth, Micheal Cox, and Charles A. Kupchan. For the optimists, it will examine the writings of Thomas Risse, Pouliot Vincent, Ingo Peters, and Erdal Onat.

Thirdly, the chapter explores some alternative theoretical perspectives that include the constructivist perspective. To be more precise, it includes the following scholars: Stephen Wood who provides a combination between 'realists' and 'constructivists views,' and Adrian Hyde who employs 'structural realist theory' to explain the state of transatlantic relations. Anders Wivel applies structural realist theory, "balancing or bandwagoning strategies", whereas Judith Kelly develops "non-strategic cooperation as a kind of soft balancing". John Peterson & Mark A.

¹¹ Tuomas Forsberg and Graeme P.Herd, *Divided West: European Security and the Transatlantic Relationship* (London: Chatham House, 2006), 35.

Pollak present a combination of realism, represented in international developments, and constructivism, represented in political changes in each side of the Atlantic. Finally, Henry A. Nau employs the same combination of realism and constructivism; for him, the realistic view is grounded in the fact that "transatlantic allies perceive threats differently," while the constructive view is due to the party affiliation's differences within the Atlantic". The chapter then focuses on the theoretical perspective of the thesis: the multidimensional approach that depends on the three major theoretical perspectives (neo-realism, neo-liberalism and constructivism).

▪ **Neo-realism, Neo-liberalism and Constructivism: Major Theories**

Numerous and different theories and methodologies have been used to explain transatlantic divergences and convergences in general and those regarding the Middle East in particular. Even before the Iraq crisis in 2003, "three major and different theoretical perspectives" were being employed to examine "transatlantic relations after the Cold War: the realist, the liberal, and the transformational" that I called constructivism. Despite the fact that each theoretical framework was competing with the other to explain transatlantic relations, it can be argued that each perspective has its own validity in explaining a part of the whole complex and complicated picture of transatlantic relations.¹²

Neo-realism (structural realism) is a theory of international relations which was mainly developed by Kenneth Waltz in 1979 as a technique to "criticize the classical realism". Waltz's main argument was that "states actions cannot express anything but the nature of the international system". In other words, states' actions and behavior reflect the international structure.¹³ Realism has some core assumptions. First, there is no global central government to help secure states. To put it differently, it is the anarchic trait of the international system that pushes states to search for their security in an insecure world. Second, states are the prime actors on the globe. In other words, states are the main if not the only actors in the international arena. Third, realism presumes "the rationality of the states and that they are unitary actors".¹⁴

¹² John S. Duffield, "Transatlantic Relations after the Cold War: Theory, Evidence, and the Future," *International Studies Perspectives* 2, no. 1(2001): 95.

¹³ Neorealism and New Life for Realism: Kenneth Waltz,
<http://www.uni-muenster.de/Politikwissenschaft/Doppeldiplom/docs/Neorealism.pdf>.

¹⁴ Louise Gibbs, "Is the European Union Becoming a Great Power" (ACDIS Occasional paper. University of Illinois at Urbana- Champaign, Chap two. September 2000), 2,
<http://acdis.illinois.edu/assets/docs/268/IsTheEuropeanUnionBecomingaGreatPower.pdf>.

However, the most important assumption is that the use of force is always possible in relations among states.¹⁵

Neo-realism is not a stable or a united theory. There are many differences among neo-realists particularly over "the institutions role and the cooperation among states". To put it differently, neo-realism has two views to international relations; "one is pessimistic (offensive), and the other one is optimistic (defensive)".¹⁶ "Offensive neo-realism" presumes that conflict is a logical outcome of the anarchic international system. In other words, it does not consider that states tend to cooperate since states depend only on themselves to ensure their security. In addition, offensive neo-realism assumes that international institutions are not significant because the main feature of international relations is rivalry among states. Accordingly, institutions have nothing to do with a system based on competition, conflict, and unrest. Contrary to offensive neo-realism, "defensive neo-realism" assumes that the international system is anarchic, but it also presumes that states pursue "defensive strategies" as a way to secure themselves. Despite the fact that defensive neo-realism accepts the idea that states may engage in conflicts, it assumes that the ultimate goal of states is not power in itself, but security. According to this understanding, cooperative aspects may exist among states because their core concern is not more power capabilities but to be secure.¹⁷

John Duffield referred to two main kinds of realism theories to portray the picture of transatlantic relations after the Cold War. These two theories are "the balance of power theory and the hegemonic stability theory".¹⁸ The Balance of Power Theory presumes that when states are in danger and threatened, they act to counter the source of threat. Cooperation among two or more states is expected when they realize that they face the same danger. In the same vein, when this danger does not exist anymore, cooperation will no longer be required. Duffield applies this theory to transatlantic relations and argues that "the enormous military power and the expansionist ideology of the Soviet Union prompted the US and Western Europe to establish a military alliance in the form of NATO and to highly engage in economic cooperation."¹⁹

However, this theory did not prove its validity when the Soviet Union collapsed because the transatlantic allies have continued their cooperative policies. Nevertheless, the theory

¹⁵ Ibid., 2

¹⁶ Ibid., 3-4.

¹⁷ Ibid., 4-8.

¹⁸ Duffield, "Transatlantic Relations after the Cold War," 92.

¹⁹ Ibid., 93-94.

maintained that there have been new dangers and threats that had had a unifying effect on transatlantic relations such as "terrorism and weapons of mass destruction."²⁰ States, when faced by threat conduct two strategies to achieve their interests and to minimize their costs. The first is "the balancing strategy" which means that states take all possible actions and steps to face the danger, for example attempting to improve their capabilities to be able to counter their adversaries. The second strategy is "bandwagoning," which means that states attempt to get along with the hyper power and adopt new policies and strategies to reconcile with the hegemonic state.²¹

The second theory, Duffield introduces, is the "Hegemonic Stability Theory" which argues that "by the combination of threats and promises, a hegemonic power can induce or coerce smaller states to open their markets and to adhere to common rules of commercial relations."²² Accordingly, this theory contends that the superpower state can both convince and compel weaker and smaller states to cooperate. In other words, this theory explains transatlantic cooperation on the ground that hegemon power can constrain some states and persuade other states that cooperation will be fruitful.

In conclusion, the realists' theoretical explanation of transatlantic relations can be put in two terms: "the distribution of power and the threat perception". To be more specific, realists argue that the collapse of the iron curtain and the disappearance of the uniting factor, "the Soviet Union as the common enemy", have paved the way for an imbalanced "distribution of power" in favor of the United States and differing threat perceptions on each side of the Atlantic. This can be an explanation of the transatlantic divergences.²³

Contrary to the realist theory, the Liberal International Theory assumes more opportunities for cooperation than possibilities of conflict between states. These assumptions start with the major hypothesis that states' actions are mainly based on interaction between states and their domestic societies. 'State preferences' are a direct result of this interaction. In addition, liberal theory presumes that persons and groups within society are the main actors when it comes to international relations because they put their differences and contradictory interests and values

²⁰ Ibid., 94-95.

²¹ Anders Wivel, "Hard Bandwagoning or Soft Balancing? Exploring the Incentives for European Security Strategies in the American World Order," (paper prepared for presentation at the panel 'The Transatlantic Relationship: Power and Institutions Reconsidered', 47th Conference of the International Studies Association, March 22-25, 2006), 4-5.

²² Duffield, "Transatlantic Relations after the Cold War," 92

²³ Forsberg, *Divided West*, 22-23.

in any decision in international relations. For liberals, "the definition of the interests of societal actors is theoretically central."²⁴ Moreover, liberalism argues that the state is just a mediator that expresses the interests of groups and individuals. In other words, liberalism considers the state as a box where any individual or group can put their cards; and according to the relative power and pressure applied by these individuals and groups, states act in international relations. Furthermore, liberalism assumes the idea of interdependence among states, which means that there are opportunities for cooperation. Interactions among states are not only confined to political levels but also include economic levels. To sum up, liberalism is based on 'state preferences' rather than 'state capabilities' as a way to illustrate and explain states' actions.²⁵

Neo-liberalism is considered an improved version of liberalism that tried to overcome the critics of the later and at the same time came as a response to neo-realism. In fact, "neo-liberalism agrees with neo-realism that states are the primary units of analysis and that states act on a rationale basis."²⁶ While neo-liberalism agrees with neo-realism on the idea that the international system is anarchic, it disagrees when it comes to evaluate the effect of this anarchic system on states' behavior. Neo-liberalism's argument in this regard, is that "despite the anarchic feature of international system, states can collaborate and reconcile".²⁷

To clarify liberalism's explanation of transatlantic relations, one should refer to its core assumption that "cooperation is promoted through the spread of democratic institutions, economic liberalization and the growing significance of international institutions".²⁸ In a sense, liberalists can explain the persistence of convergence and collaboration between Europe and the United States and the survival of NATO, as a milestone of transatlantic cooperation, as a consequence of "transatlantic shared values and their common institutions".²⁹ In the same vein, liberals can explain divergences between transatlantic allies on the ground of "diverging values" between them, which means in turn that internal factors on both sides of the Atlantic are of significance in explaining transatlantic relations. Accordingly, the neoconservatives in the United

²⁴ Andrew Moravcsik, "Taking Preferences Seriously: A Liberal Theory of International Politics," *International Organization* 51, no. 4 (1997): 517-519.

²⁵ Ibid., 519-520.

²⁶ Jan Karlas, "Neo-liberalism and Institutional Form in International Relations: Theoretical Precision and Empirical Challenge," (4th CEEISA Convention, Tartu (Estonia), June 2006), 3, <http://www.ceeisaconf.ut.ee/orb.aw/class=file/.../id.../karlas.doc>.

²⁷ Ibid., 4.

²⁸ Forsberg, *Divided West*, 26.

²⁹ Ibid., 26.

States and changes in European governments such as France and Germany can explain the causes of transatlantic divergences or convergences with respect to the Middle East.³⁰

Constructivism, 'the transformational approach' as Duffield called it, is the third theoretical framework that analyzes the state of transatlantic relations. It explains "international relations and states' behavior in terms of ideational factors, such as belief systems, images, cognitive maps, collective identity, and culture".³¹ To put it differently, constructivism approaches international relations through changes in beliefs, interests and identities of states which affect the way those states act and their perception of others:

The constructive approach emphasizes how ideas, prestige, reputation and identity impacts on power – in the way in which power is understood and how it is practiced, how it is used. The way in which states act is partly the result of how these identities are constructed.³²

Hence, constructivism gives more attention to the differing ways culture and beliefs have been created in both the United States and Europe, and argue that such historically created beliefs and cultures shape "the strategic culture of the state," which determines the way states perceive the most appropriate conduct in international politics, whether in a harsh way or softly.³³ Therefore, constructivism can explain part of the transatlantic picture by going deeply into the strategic cultures of both Europe as a union and as a composition of different cultures and the United States.

³⁰ Ibid., 27- 28.

³¹ Duffield, "Transatlantic Relations after the Cold War," 96.

³² Graeme P. Herd and Forsberg Tuomas, "Constructive Transatlantic Strategic Dissonance: Making a Virtue out of Vice?," *International Politics*, 45 (2008): 366.

³³ Forsberg, *Divided West*, 29.

▪ Transatlantic Relations: Pessimists versus Optimists

From the outset, transatlantic relations studies were mainly dominated by two groups of academic scholars and experts. The first group are the pessimists, mainly neo-realists, who have always emphasized the fact that there are diverging positions and severe disagreements between the transatlantic allies and predicted severe splits among them. The optimists, on the other hand, argue that transatlantic relations may sometimes be troubled, but this is mainly because of temporary political differences that may lead to temporary and haphazard divergences. This optimistic group predicts a "more stable and promising future for transatlantic relations, once lessons are learned and implemented in political situations".³⁴

The pessimistic perspective of transatlantic relations is mainly a neo-realistic one which assumes that states are the central actors in a crisis as well as the primary unities of analysis. Its proponents argue that "the international system is anarchic, that the balance of power is the main thing that matters in transatlantic relations, and that national interests have priority over multi- or supranational arrangements".³⁵ Robert Kagan employs one of the most famous pessimistic arguments to depict the state of transatlantic relations, particularly after the transatlantic split over the Iraq war 2003. Kagan claims that the transatlantic rift illustrates the very fact that "Americans are from Mars and Europeans are from Venus: they agree on little and understand one another less and less". Besides, Kagan asks scholars and academics to no longer repeat the old-fashioned and obsolete argument that "transatlantic allies still share the same outlook to the world".³⁶ Accordingly, Kagan argues that national interests, threats and tools of foreign policy are not the same in the United States and Europe:

When it comes to setting national priorities, determining threats, defining challenges, and fashioning and implementing foreign and defense policies, the United States and Europe have parted away.³⁷

In addition, Kagan argued that "cultural rifts among publics on both continents" were reflected in deeper divergences between transatlantic allies over issues such as the American

³⁴ Peters Ingo, "Cooperation, Conflict and Crisis: the Impact of the Iraq War on European- American Relations" (paper presented at the International Studies Association (ISA) Annual Conference. Freie Universitat Berlin, 26-29 March 2008), 1-2.

³⁵ Stephen Wood, "The Iraq War: Five European Roles," (paper no. 112, presented at the National Europe Centre on Friday, 13 June 2003), 1-2.

³⁶ Robert Kagan, *Of Paradise and Power: America and Europe in the New World Order* (New York: Vintage Books, 2004), 2.

³⁷ —, "Power and weakness," Policy Review, 113(2002): <http://www.mtholyoke.edu.html>.

perception of the use of force versus the European perception of the validity of negotiations and international law, the American perception of the idea that might is right versus the European perception of legitimacy and multilateralism as appropriate ways to solve crises. However, the most significant divergence, as Kagan states, was "on an ideological basis" which is a direct result of the long and different experience of both allies: the European Union as a civilian power that has been depending on negotiations, incentives, and compromises, and the United States as a puissance power that has always thought of the use of power as a very possible and effective way to solve problems and crises.³⁸

To sum up Kagan's point of view, he argues that the growing "power asymmetry" between Europe and the US has led to "divergent strategic cultures and interests," which meant transatlantic conflict over three important perspectives: "the use of force, the rules and institutions, and the principles of international order".³⁹ However, after the Iraq war and the enormous problems that faced the American administration in Iraq, for example, reconstruction processes and unrest, Kagan tended to soften his tone in his essay "America's Crisis of Legitimacy". To be more specific, Kagan asked for "a new transatlantic bargain," where the United States should give Europeans a bigger role, and Europeans, in return, give the United States "the legitimacy" and "share some of the burden".⁴⁰

Kagan's argument was widely debated by many other academic scholars. Philip H. Gordon and Jeremy Shapiro, in their work Allies at War: America, Europe and the Crisis over Iraq agree with Kagan that the reason for transatlantic divergences was "the increasing asymmetry" in military capabilities between the US and the EU, "differing outlooks towards the world and threats, and differing strategies that are based on their differing historical experience after the World War II". However, they refuted Kagan's conclusion that the end of transatlantic allies is unquestionable and contended that transatlantic rifts can be repaired:

There can be little doubt that the divisions revealed during the crisis in Iraq stem from real and growing structural differences between the United States and Europe—differences in capabilities, perspectives, and strategies. Yet we reject the conclusion that the breakup of the transatlantic alliance is therefore inevitable.⁴¹

³⁸ Norris Pippa, "How Damaging is the Transatlantic Rift? Bush's leadership and America's Allies," *A Journal of Leadership* (2003), 1-2, <http://www.hks.harvard.edu/html>.

³⁹ Kagan, *Of Paradise and Power*, 5.

⁴⁰ —, "America's Crisis of Legitimacy," *Foreign Affairs* 83, no.2 (2004), 9-10, <http://www.foreignaffairs.org/20040301faessay83207/robert-kagan/america-s-crisis-oflegitimacy.html>.

⁴¹ Philip H. Gordon and Shapiro, Jeremy, *Allies at War: America, Europe and the Crisis over Iraq* (Washington DC: Brookings Institution Book/McGraw-Hill, 2004), 5.

William C. Wohlforth in his article "Transatlantic Relations in a Unipolar World" relies on a realistic approach to give his own vision for the future of transatlantic relations after the Iraq war. Wohlforth attributed the divergences between transatlantic allies to the disappearance of the major threat that bounded them together: the Soviet Union. As a consequence of the fall of the Soviet Union, a new international system, characterized by "unipolarity" and incomparable American military power, came into force:

U.S. Power is not unlimited, but it is unprecedented. The United States accounts for 60% of all defence spending among the world's major powers. It also accounts for 40% of economic production, 40% of high-technology production, and 50% of total research and development expenditures. No state in history could do this.⁴²

Wohlforth predicts that the most appropriate thing the major powers, particularly Europe, should do is to preserve good and conciliatory relations with the United States, in his words "at most to bandwagon with the United States".⁴³

Michael Cox, in his article "Beyond the West: Terrors in Transatlantia," challenges the liberal theories of international relations on the grounds that they provided no logical explanation for the severe crisis of transatlantic allies over Iraq and the split among European states themselves. According to Cox, the binding ties, such as "institutions, interests, and ideology" on which liberal theories relied did not work out:

The split between a number of European states and the United States of America not only casts doubt on the idea of the 'West' but also brings into question various liberal theories of international politics that suggest that the two regions are so bound together by ideology, interest and institutions that a serious disagreement between them was, and presumably remains, unlikely.⁴⁴

In fact, Cox concluded that "changes taking place in the balance of forces between Europe and the United States" are considered the major element to predict possible coming divergences in the near future of transatlantic allies.⁴⁵

One should also refer to the Charles A. Kupchan's reflections about the state of transatlantic relations. Kupchan partly embraces Kagan's argument about the change from the era of European empire, when Europe had the capabilities and consequently the desire and

⁴² William C. Wohlforth, "Transatlantic Relations in a Unipolar World" (Occasional paper Series, no. 41), 3-4, <http://www.google.de/search?hl=de&q=Wohlforth+CP.html>.

⁴³ Ibid., 5.

⁴⁴ Michael Cox, "Beyond the West: Terrors in Transatlantia," *European Journal of International Relations* 11, no. 2 (2005): 202

⁴⁵ Ibid., 226.

willingness to use force, to the era of American puissance. Thus America uses force to achieve its foreign policy while European power projection had many shortcomings:

When Europe enjoyed global hegemony, Americans criticized its arrogance. Now that the United States is the global hegemon, Europeans complained about its "selfish super power position".⁴⁶

Despite the fact that Kupchan accepts the ideas that the "power asymmetry between the United States and Europe is a major factor in shaping the transatlantic relations," he comes to a different conclusion. For Kupchan, the very reason for divergences and splits between the United States and Europe is the tangible desire of Europe, particularly core Europe, to move away from being a political dwarf in the international arena to be an effective international actor, not against the United States but at least to have a say in international affairs:

It is not the weakness of Europe, but rather its growing power and increasing universal ambitions that leads to conflict and disagreement with the US.⁴⁷

Accordingly, Kupchan dwells on the fact that it is Europe's desire to gain more influence over the global issues, and not its weakness as Kagan argues, explains divergences among transatlantic allies.

The optimistic perspective of transatlantic relations lies in Thomas Risse, Vincent Pouliot, Ingo Peters, and Erdal Onat's writings. In his work "Beyond Iraq: Challenges to the Transatlantic Security Community," Thomas Risse attributes transatlantic divergences to "domestic political developments on either side of the Atlantic".⁴⁸ In fact, Risse started by refuting the neo-realists assumption of "the end of the Cold War because it did not lead to the collapse of NATO, but it was instead enlarged and strengthened". Secondly Risse refutes the idea that the incomparable US power and the civilian Europe would explain differences in transatlantic relations, on the grounds that power is not confined to military aspects but includes an economic aspect where Europe is not a dwarf but an economic giant. Thirdly, Risse contended that the events of September 11 can partly explain some aspects of differences

⁴⁶ Charles A. Kupchan, *the End of the American Era: US Foreign Policy and the Geopolitics of the Twenty-First Century* (New York: Vintage, 2003), 222-223.

⁴⁷ ____, "the Atlantic Order in Transition: the Nature of Change in the US- European Relations," in: *the End of the West: Crisis and Change in the Atlantic Order*. eds. Jeffery Anderson et al, first ed (Ithaca and London: Cornell University Press, 2008), 118- 124.

⁴⁸ Thomas Risse, "Beyond Iraq: Challenges to the Transatlantic Security Community" (paper presented at the American Institute for Contemporary German Studies, Washington DC, January 24, 2003), 2.

between transatlantic allies "when it comes to differences in perceptions of the terrorist attacks and the appropriate tools to address them".⁴⁹ Risse concludes his idea in his words:

Neither the end of the Cold War nor U.S. unipolarity as such nor the new threats of terrorist networks constitute changes in world politics which would spell the end of the transatlantic community as such. These processes have in common that they are indeterminate with regard to their consequences for the U.S.-European relationship. If we want to understand the current transatlantic problems, we have to look at domestic political developments on either side of the Atlantic. These developments lead to differences in perceptions and foreign policy outlooks which then challenge the transatlantic relationship".⁵⁰

Risse relied on 'the concept of transatlantic security community' to argue that such community is still efficient because it depends on "a collective identity" based on common values, economic interdependence based on common material interests, and common institutions based on norms regulating the relationship, which are called "three Is"-identities, interdependence, institutions".⁵¹ In sum, Risse concluded that the current conflicts in transatlantic relations are mainly due to "domestic developments on both allies which leads to different perceptions of current security threats, and different prescriptions on how to tackle them," therefore Risse argued that:

The current transatlantic conflicts have to be explained by differences in the worldviews of the dominant foreign policy elites in charge in the U.S. as compared to Europe.⁵²

To put it in other words, Risse contends that the American administration led by Bush had two conservative wings; one is extreme which opts for acting alone and ignoring European allies when it comes to American national interests and the other one is moderate which calls for the necessity of allies to America to conduct its policies efficiently. The extremist wing "neo-conservative liberal unilateralists" prevailed. In the same vein, Europe was dominated by two types of multilaterals governments: "liberal multilateralists—the European center-left, on the one hand, and more realist multilateralists – the European center-right, on the other hand". According to Risse, the cause of divergences between transatlantic allies has nothing to do with "liberal values"; instead it comes from American unilateralist policy versus multilateralism European vision.⁵³

⁴⁹ Ibid., 3-6

⁵⁰ Ibid., 6.

⁵¹ Ibid., 7-8

⁵² Ibid., 21.

⁵³ Ibid., 21.

Another scholar, Vincent Pouliot in his response to Michael Cox's perspective of transatlantic relations, which questioned the explanatory power and the validity of "a transatlantic security community," argues that the recent divergences between the Atlantic allies do not imply that "the concept of transatlantic security community" is not working any more. On the contrary, Pouliot argues, these divergences demonstrate the efficiency and validity of "transatlantic security community".⁵⁴ To put it differently, Pouliot argues that maintaining a security community does not mean the non-existence of differences, conflicts, and even crises. Rather, "the main characteristic of such a community is the fact that any conflicts that arise within the security community are solved peacefully".⁵⁵ Accordingly, Pouliot argues that the transatlantic rift is a proof not of the death of a security community, but of "the power politics of peace allies...struggling to impose identities, security cultures and norms on one another".⁵⁶

From another perspective, Ingo Peters, in his work "Cooperation, Conflict, and Crisis: The Impact of the Iraq War on European-American Relations," uses two main modes to measure the quality of cooperation between transatlantic relations: the "collaborative mode (high valuation of cooperation) and the dissociative mode (low valuation of cooperation)". In addition, Peters employed "four criteria to measure the level of cooperation between transatlantic allies: valuation of cooperation, use of institution, flexibility and willing to negotiate, and words and deeds".⁵⁷ Based on his two modes of cooperation and the four criteria mentioned above, Peters concluded that the "transatlantic crisis over Iraq war 2003 was an empirical evidence of cooperation failure".⁵⁸ Nevertheless, he argued that "after the Iraq crisis there was a renaissance of transatlantic cooperation".⁵⁹ In other words, Peters claims that the Iraq crisis has been accompanied by strong tendencies from both sides of the Atlantic to revive and repair transatlantic relations. The major reasons for such a convergence in transatlantic relations after the Iraq crisis are, according to Peters, "domestic factors in the United States and Europe: the reconciliatory policies of the Bush Administration in its second term in an attempt to convince Europe to share some of the burdens weather in Iraq or Afghanistan, and the changes in

⁵⁴ Vincent Pouliot, "the Alive and Well Transatlantic Security Community: A Theoretical Reply to Michael Cox," *European Journal of International Relations* 12, no. 1(2006):122.

⁵⁵ Ibid., 123.

⁵⁶ Ibid., 124-125.

⁵⁷ Ingo, "Cooperation, Conflict and Crisis," 8.

⁵⁸ Ibid., 10

⁵⁹ Ibid., 17

governments in major European countries which paved the way for more collaborative policies between Europe and the United States".⁶⁰

To put it differently, Peters argues that the American predicaments in Iraq such as the causalities and the political unrest, its capabilities overstretch, and its image's deterioration among Americans according to public opinion polls pushed the same American administration in its second term to take a more convergent policies with Europe, to seek a more European involvement in Iraq particularly in the reconstruction process and to conduct more pragmatic policy with Europe's efforts to counter Iran's nuclear crisis. In the same vein, changes in government such as Germany, Angela Merkel, and France, Nicolay Sarkozy, paved the way for more cooperative policies with the American Administration.

Unlike Peters who gives more attention to domestic policies within the Atlantic allies as an explanation to the state of transatlantic allies, Erdal Onat, in his study "Tension and Cooperation in Transatlantic Relations with Regard To Iraq," gives more significance to 'the structures of power' to illustrate divergences and convergences in transatlantic relations. To be more specific, Onat argues that the major interest of the United States to control over the Middle East comes through securing the oil reserves, toppling a leader of a rouge state (Sadaam Huseen), and controlling trade has led to its decision to invade Iraq. In the same vein, the refusal of both France and Germany can be explained in the fact that they perceived this war as "the end of their influence in the Middle East". Simultaneously, Onat dwells on the transatlantic "shared values and common interests" to explain their mutual desire to converge and cooperate.⁶¹ At the end of his analysis to the state of transatlantic relations, Onat assumes that cooperation in transatlantic relations is an ongoing process because there are both existing problems and opportunities for cooperation:

It can be pointed out that the existence of the problems between the powers and the opportunities for cooperation are two sides of the same coin which should be all taken into consideration to assess the future of the [transatlantic] relations.⁶²

Accordingly, Onat assumes that the dominant feature of transatlantic relations is cooperation and problems exist but they do not mean the end of the alliance.

⁶⁰ Ibid., 25.

⁶¹ Erdel Onat, "Tension and cooperation in the Transatlantic Relation with Regard to Iraq" (Thesis Submitted to the Graduate School of Social Sciences, Middle East Technical University, June 2005), 115.

⁶² Ibid., 116.

To sum up the pessimists perspective of transatlantic relations, one can conclude that it dwells on the end of such alliance and that the divergences on both sides of the Atlantic are growing and deepening. According to this perspective, divergences are expected to prevail in the near future for different reasons such as capabilities discrepancies, cultural differences, historical experiences, different foreign policy tools, growing European ambitions to balance the United States, and the absence of the ultimate threat. In the same vein, the optimists argue that there are differences between transatlantic allies. Such divergences are not based on essential or fundamental differences, but on a temporarily basis such as domestic developments. However, the core of transatlantic alliance is still working because of different reasons for instance economic interdependence, common institutions, shared values and interests of western democracies.

▪ **Alternative Theoretical Frameworks**

We may presume that some alternative theoretical frameworks are used to explain the state of transatlantic relations. Most of these alternative theoretical frameworks dwell on the mixture of cooperation and conflict to illustrate the state of transatlantic relations. Accordingly, we will point to select studies as a way to better understand the state of transatlantic relations. Stephen Wood in his work "The Iraq War: Five European Roles" relies on a combination of "realist" and "domestic politics" approaches to explain transatlantic relations in Iraq. To be more precise, Wood concentrates on the national differences among European countries, particularly major ones like Germany, France, Britain, and Poland, to explain the rift among Europeans and between Europe and the United States.⁶³

Another study was presented by Adrian Hyde-Price's "The Continental Drift: Transatlantic Relations and American Unipolarity". Hyde-Price employs "structural realist theory" to explain the state of transatlantic relations in the post-cold war period, particularly the ramifications of the 2003 Iraq War, on transatlantic relations. Hyde-Price argues that the main characteristic of transatlantic relations since the collapse of the Soviet Union is what he called "continental drift".⁶⁴ He means by this concept that the Soviet Union's collapse led to an unprecedented era of American hyper-power and a considerable change in the world order from

⁶³ Wood, "the Iraq War: Five European Roles", 16-17.

⁶⁴ Hyde-Price Adrian, " 'Continental Drift': Transatlantic Relations and American Unipolarity," (paper presented at the 31st Annual BISA Conference University College Cork, University of Leicester, Department of Politics and International Relations, 18-20th December 2006), 1.

"bipolarity" to "unipolarity," which means, according to Hyde-Price, "the emergence of different foreign and security policy preferences of America and its European allies".⁶⁵ Despite this "continental drift," Hyde-Price presumes that the future of transatlantic relation will be "a mixture between conflict and cooperation" based on the American desire to engage with Europe to "maximize its power" according to "the deductive logic of offensive realism". Hyde-Price thinks that the United States will stick to its mainstream strategy, the supremacy of American power, while attempting, in the same vein, to put limits on the other superpowers, such as Europe, by engaging with it. Hyde-Price explains this in his own words:

As a power maximiser, the United States would not merely seek to prevent the rise of potential hegemony in other regions; it would also seek to constrain the influence of existing great powers.⁶⁶

Accordingly, Hyde-Price argues that the transatlantic differences will continue, combined with cooperative policies on specific issues. But this cooperation is based on "a changed structural distribution of power": "US global unipolar power and EU regional multipolar power".⁶⁷

Another research paper, written by Andres Wivel, questions Robert Kagan's perspective in two regards: The first is the fact that European Union, contrary to the United States, has no one voice or one interest but rather is a combination of "various and differing national interests". In addition, when it comes to European relations with the United States, two different positions can be figured out: "One Atlanticist, with Great Britain and most of the new EU member states, and one Europeanist, with France and Germany and some small European states". Wivel's second point, unlike Kagan's argument, is that the United States and Europe have the same aims regarding "the current world order".⁶⁸ In his pursuit to explain how Europe reacts with the Americans, Wivel employs "structural realist assumptions". According to him, in the anarchic nature of the international system, each state attempts to preserve its security through "balancing or bandwagoning strategies". In addition, Wivel made a distinction between a "hard and a soft" version of each of the strategies: "hard balancing and soft balancing & hard bandwagoning and soft bandwagoning". Wivel defines hard balancing and soft balancing strategies as follows:

⁶⁵ Ibid., 19.

⁶⁶ Ibid., 9.

⁶⁷ Ibid., 9.

⁶⁸ Wivel Anders, "Explaining European Behavior in the Unipolar World Order: the Role of Institutions, Strategy and Military Action" (paper prepared for presentation at the panel 'European Security Governance', 48th Conference of the International Studies Association, Chicago, IL, USA, February 28-March 3, 2007), 2.

Hard balancing [is] a strategy where states adopt strategies to build and update their military capabilities, as well as create and maintain formal alliances and counter alliances, to match the capabilities of their key opponents. Soft balancing is often based on a limited arms buildup, ad hoc cooperative exercises, or collaboration in regional or international institutions.⁶⁹

In other words, hard balancing implies that states in their attempt to be on an equal footing with the rivalry state try to improve their military situation and projection capabilities and seek to counterbalance the rivalry through searching for other powerful allies and conducting alliances with. While soft balancing means that states tend to refer the contradictory issues to multilateral and global institutions. In the same vein, Wivel defines hard bandwagoning and soft bandwagoning in his own words as follows:

Hard bandwagoning [is] a strategy, where states either tacitly or openly chooses to revise key elements of their security strategy in order to support the most powerful or threatening state. Soft bandwagoning [is] a strategy, where states either tacitly or openly make small adaptations in their security strategy in order to support the most powerful or threatening state.⁷⁰

Hence, hard bandwagoning means that states tend completely and with no complains to conciliate their policies and accept the policies of the hyper power stat and even offer assistance to it. While soft balancing means that states tries to cope partly with the hyper power and make few changes in their positions, but they still keep a distance of accepted differences with the hyper power but they declare their support to it. Wivel employs these distinctive conceptual strategies to measure the European Union's reaction to United States policies in the entire world. However, he contends "three factors" will define which strategy the European Union may pursue. These three factors are: "relative power, relative ideology and relative security".⁷¹

To illustrate these factors 'relative power' means that the discrepancy among states in the material power decides their opted strategies according to the estimation of overall expected gains and expected losses.⁷² 'Relative ideology' refers to the fact that possibilities of conflicts are higher when each state has a distinguished and completely different ideology.⁷³ 'Relative security' means that states tend to calculate the costs of the strategies. When sates choose low cost strategies, they tend to hard bandwagoning and soft bandwagoning, while the high cost strategies means hard balancing and soft balancing. Finally, Wivel concludes that Europe tends

⁶⁹ Ibid., 3

⁷⁰ Ibid., 4.

⁷¹ Ibid., 4.

⁷² Ibid., 5.

⁷³ Ibid., 7.

to have a mixture of "hard bandwagoning strategy with soft balancing at the margins". To put it differently, Europeans adjust their policies to cope with American strategies and they do not count on the assumption that the United States would change its strategies to reconcile with them.⁷⁴ This means, according to the bandwagoning strategy, that Europe chooses to adapt to the American policies, but according to the soft balancing strategy, Europe attempts to find a role by cooperating with the United States.

Unlike Wivel, Judith Kelley emphasizes "the soft balancing", in a different way, to explain European behavior towards the United States. Kelley employs a new concept, "strategic non-cooperation as soft balancing" as the strategy of weaker actors. Kelley defines "the strategic non-cooperation" in her own words as follows:

Strategic non-cooperation is when a weak state seeks to increase future influence vis-à-vis a strong state by deliberately rejecting inequitable cooperation.⁷⁵

Thus, Kelley applies the 'strategic non-cooperation' concept on the Iraq case and concludes that France and Germany abstained to cooperate with the United States on the grounds that this "non-cooperation" would give them a more "relative balance of influence with the US on global issues". This behavior of "non cooperation" is a result of the asymmetry in military power between the United States and Europe which tempts the United States to conduct its policies without giving Europeans a say. Accordingly, "hard balancing is not an option between democratic states, weaker states have to opt for soft balancing to regain influence."⁷⁶ Hence, European states tend to influence the United States through a calculated non cooperation, so that the United States takes into consideration the European interests in the future conflicts.

One also has to refer to John Peterson & Mark A. Pollack's essay entitled "The End of Transatlantic Partnership". This study refers to the fact that "the evolution of transatlantic relations depends mainly on both international developments and political changes on each side of the Atlantic".⁷⁷ After investigating the impact of the election of George Bush, September 11, the war in Afghanistan, the American national security strategy, and the Iraq war, the study concludes that there is "a fundamental and growing asymmetry of power between US and EU

⁷⁴ Ibid., 35.

⁷⁵ Judith Kelley, "Strategic Non-cooperation as Soft Balancing: Why Iraq Was not Just about Iraq," *International Politics* 42, (2005): 153-154.

⁷⁶ Ibid., 166-169.

⁷⁷ John Peterson and Mark A. Pollack, "The End of Transatlantic Partnership?," in: *Europe, America, Bush: Transatlantic Relations in the Twenty-First Century*. eds. John Peterson and Mark A. Pollack, (London and New York, Routledge, 2003), 128.

and an increasing divergence in perceptions on the most thorny questions of international politics".⁷⁸ To put it differently, the US relies increasingly on different tools; particularly it's unilaterally the material force to face threat such as terrorism and rogue states, while Europe relies on its civilian aspects in international relations, particularly to effectively engage and to give me significance to international institutions.

However, the most interesting study about the reasons behind transatlantic divergences is proposed by Henry A. Nau. He argues that divergences between the United States and Europe have nothing to do with "international values or institutions". Instead, they are about differing American and European perceptions of threats, which lead to contradictory points of views on the appropriate tools to face the threats, particularly on the value of using force versus diplomacy.⁷⁹ The Iraq crisis, argues Nau, is a clear-cut example for such differences in threat perceptions. In a sense that the United States perceived the Iraq "terrorist threat" higher than Europe did and accordingly the United States perceived the use of force as appropriate while Europe did not.⁸⁰ Nau compares between "the historical crises and the current crisis in transatlantic relations (Iraq crisis)" in order to prove his argument.⁸¹

In addition, Nau contends that "the political divergences, particularly over Iraq, may also be explained by political party differences across the Atlantic". What is interesting is the fact that Nau offers a theoretical perspective that combines both realistic and constructivist thinking to explain the divergences in transatlantic relations. Furthermore, he contends that realist, liberal, and constructive perspectives can be hold together to explain the Iraq crisis:

The various measures that the realists, liberals, and constructivists emphasize to define crisis may interact. A crisis over threat, such as 9\11, may precipitate a crisis over institutions, such as U.S unilateralism. And an institutional crisis in turn may lead to undermining common values, such as Respect for the rule of law.⁸²

Accordingly, Nau accepts the idea that major theoretical perspectives (realism, liberalism, and constructivism) can together explain the whole and broader state transatlantic relations. For the realist perspective, the main terms of explanation are "shifts in power balances

⁷⁸ Ibid., 140.

⁷⁹ Henry R. Nau, "Iraq and Previous Transatlantic Crises: Divided by Threat, Not Institutions or Values," in: *the End of the West: Crisis and Change in the Atlantic Order*. eds. Jeffery Anderson et al, first ed (Ithaca and London: Cornell University Press, 2008), 82.

⁸⁰ Ibid., 83.

⁸¹ Ibid., 89-101.

⁸² Ibid., 85.

and threat perceptions", the liberal perspective, holds for "institutions and interdependence", while constructivism dwells on "identities and values".⁸³

In conclusion, most of these studies revolved around not to depend on a one theoretical perspective to explain transatlantic relations, but instead tried to have a mixture of theoretical perspectives in order to better understand the mixed picture of conflict and cooperation in transatlantic relations.

⁸³ Ibid., 82.

▪ The Multidimensional Approach

The thesis's theoretical perspective depends on neo-realist, neo-liberal, and constructive approaches to explain reasons for convergences and divergences in American-European policies towards Middle East issues. There is no intrinsic approach in itself; rather its value lies in its explanatory power. Besides, the thesis will take a wider context, the international system approach, due to the fact that transatlantic relations are the milestone of the international order. The thesis attempts to show in the table below the different indicators of the three different theoretical perspectives through different phases of the state of transatlantic relations regarding the Middle East issues.

Different Phases:

1- The end of 2002 until the end of 2003 (Divergences and Convergences)

Neo-realism	Neo-liberalism	Constructivism
Indicators: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 11 September 2001 • Unipolar system and unilateralism versus multilateralism • NSS 2002 • Split over Iraq: divergences in capabilities, threat perceptions and the appropriate way to react. • ESS 2003 • Preventive action versus preemptive strikes • Different American and European strategies to fight terrorism • Different threat perceptions 	Indicators: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Despite differences, transatlantic allies tend to rapprochement • Transatlantic economic interdependence • The European support to the US after the war • Different interests of European governments towards the war: France, Germany, Britain, Italy, Spain, and the new member states. • The American administration vision(neo-cons) 	Indicators: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Changes in values, beliefs, identities, and strategic cultures. • Different images about each other.

2- The end of 2003 until the end of 2008 (Divergences and Convergences)

Neo realism	Neo-liberalism	Constructivism
<p>Indicators:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The US failure in Iraq and the deteriorating security situation • Shortage in American resources to rebuild Iraq and Afghanistan • American desire for Europe to share the burden, in Iraq and Afghanistan. • American desire to give NATO and the UN an important role in Iraq. • Pragmatism in handling other issues, like Iran 	<p>Indicators:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Both sides draw lessons of the Iraq • Rapprochement in statements and summits favoring reviving transatlantic alliance • Reconstruction process bigger rule to EU and NATO • Training troops in Iraq and outside • NSS 2006: a more conciliatory interpretation for its 2002 version • Rapprochement in dealing with Iran, despite differences in the appropriate way. • The change in the Bush's second administration policy towards reconciliation with Europe • Changes in European governments, such as France, Germany, Britain, Italy, and Spain. 	<p>Indicators:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Changes in values, believes, identities, and strategic cultures. • Different images about each other.

3- The end of 2008 until the end of 2009 (Divergences and Convergences)

The thesis examines which approach has more explanatory power, taking into consideration a new American administration in the White House with a different agenda towards Iraq, Iran and the Middle East Peace Process than its predecessor.

In fact, it can be argued that each major theoretical perspective, whether neo-realist, neo-liberalist, or constructivist, gives a part of the broader picture of the state of transatlantic relations. As for the neo-realistic perspective, transatlantic relations convergences and divergences can be explained in terms of power and asymmetry of capabilities between the United States and Europe, the absence of a core external threat after the disappearance of the Soviet threat, balancing or bandwagoning strategies, offensive or defensive strategies. To be more precise, American unilateralism in its foreign policy, particularly through George W Bush first term, its new national security strategy of 17 September 2002, and its unilateral decision to invade Iraq on the basis of a coalition of the willing and not through the United Nations and without its long- time allies, all can be explained by a neo-realistic perspective. The response of the European states and the severe split over how to respond to the United States new policies and strategies can be also explained in the strategies of soft or hard balancing by the big European states such as France and Germany, and in soft or hard bandwagoning by some other big European states such as Britain, Spain, Italy and the new Eastern and Central European states.

As for the neoliberal perspective, transatlantic convergences and divergences can be explained in terms of the fact that alliances always have troubles and even more severe crisis but that transatlantic relation' core goals, values, and institutions still working effectively. This explains the tendencies of rapprochement between the United States and Europe after the Iraq war, the lesson drawn by both sides of the Atlantic, particularly in Bush's second term. It can also explain the domestic factors that affect the state of transatlantic relations, particularly in governments' changes in Europe and changes in American administration during Bush's second term. Accordingly, it can explain the new European Security strategy of 12 December 2003, and the new American security strategy in 2006, and it can also explain transatlantic economic

interdependence as well as the European and American convergence regarding Iraq after war, Iran's nuclear file, and Palestinian- Israeli peace process.

According to the constructive perspective, transatlantic convergences and divergences can be explained in terms of the values that have been changed and the images of both sides of the Atlantic toward each other. For example the public opinion polls on both sides of the Atlantic and the anti-Americanism in Europe can be explained by such approach. In addition, transatlantic divergences can be attributed to their differing strategic cultures about sovereignty and legitimacy.

In fact, all these theoretical frameworks attempt to explain the state of transatlantic relations. Firstly they demonstrate the complexity characteristics of transatlantic relation. Therefore; transatlantic relations are too complex to be studied by one theory. Rather we need a theory that combines various aspects of cooperation and conflict, convergences and divergences. Secondly, most of these theoretical frameworks revolve around explaining divergences and convergences in transatlantic relations, even though with different perspectives: Pessimists argue that recent crises mean the end of transatlantic relations, while optimists hold that there are problems but that they can be resolved.

Thirdly, many different concepts have been deployed to explain the state of transatlantic relations, ranging from power capacities, unipolarity versus bipolarity, unilateralism versus multilateralism, March versus Venus, continental drift, transatlantic security community, collaborative mode versus dissociative mode of cooperation, shared values versus different values, threat perception, soft balancing versus hard bandwagoning, strategic non-cooperation as a soft balancing, domestic factors on both sides of the Atlantic, culture and identity. One argues that all these concepts emanate from the broader international relations theories that theorize transatlantic relations: neo-liberalism, neo- liberalism, and constructivism.

Finally, the thesis will make use of most of the studies mentioned above. On a conceptual level, the thesis will make use of "the concept of transatlantic crisis", employed by Ingo Peters, to illustrate divergences between transatlantic allies. Peters defines the transatlantic crisis over Iraq as "a political conflict about under what circumstances, for what purpose, and under whose authorization (force) could be used".⁸⁴ The thesis also adopts Peters' concept of cooperation as "the mechanism of adjusting initially different interests, preferences, and

⁸⁴ Ingo, "Cooperation, Conflict and Crisis," 3.

policies"⁸⁵ to illustrate the convergences between Atlantic partners. In addition, the thesis will use Andreas Wivel's concepts of "balancing and bandwagoning strategies" to explain European reactions in the case studies (Iraq, Iran, and the Palestinian- Israeli peace process). The thesis will also dwell on Wivel's analysis that Europe is not a united actor and his idea of 'Atlantics' and 'Europeanists'.

On the analytical level, the thesis will draw on most of these studies and new ones to explain the reasons of transatlantic convergences and divergences regarding the Middle East issues. For instance, most of these studies dwell on case studies, and some domestic reasons for transatlantic differences, analyzing the national security strategies on both sides of the Atlantic. To conclude, transatlantic convergences and divergences are too complex to be tackled from one angle, whether realistic, liberal, or constructivist. Therefore, a more comprehensive theoretical framework is a necessity to better understand transatlantic relations and a prelude to understand the priorities and strategies of Europe and the United States regarding the Middle East in the next chapter.

⁸⁵ Ibid., 5.

Conclusion:

Different theories have examined transatlantic policies in general and with respect to the Middle East in particular. Neo-realism, Neo-liberalism and Constructivism were the main premises based on which the transatlantic policies were being analyzed. Because the transatlantic relations are very multifarious and multifaceted, each theory is applicable to explain different angles of the transatlantic relations. In other words, each theory has its own assumptions based on which the transatlantic policies are explained from a different perspective.

Neo-realism, for example, is a revamped version of the realism theory. The realism theory assumes the anarchy of the international system, the states' sole action in the globe, and their usual tendency to exploit their influence and power in international relations, albeit with rational calculations. Neo-realism, on the other hand, has two perceptions towards international relations; pessimistic (offensive) and optimistic (defensive). Offensive neo-realism presumes the anarchic nature of international system, the non-existence of collaboration among states, and the irrelevance of international institutions. Defensive neo-realism, on the contrary, presumes that states may get into conflicts; nevertheless they may also resort to collaboration in order to attain their security. According to the realist assumptions, transatlantic policies can be explained in terms of the diverse power distribution and threats perception on each side of the Atlantic.

Neo-liberalism is also a revamped version of liberalism theory. The Liberal International Theory presumes that cooperation among states is more likely to take place than conflicts; states' behavior is a result of an interaction between states and their domestic societies, and individuals and groups are highly significant in determining the states' behavior. Neo-liberalism, on the other hand, matches with neo-realism in presuming that states are the main actors, rationale in their behavior, and that international system is anarchic. Nevertheless, neo-realism presumes that cooperation among states is also applicable. According to the liberalist assumptions, transatlantic policies can be explained in terms of cooperation, international institutions, common and diverging values, and domestic factors on each side of the Atlantic.

Constructivism or 'the transformational approach' as Duffield called analyzes international politics anchored in ideational factors, such as belief systems, images, cognitive maps, collective identity, and culture. According to the constructivist assumptions, transatlantic policies can be explained in terms of different cultures and beliefs on each side of the Atlantic.

Transatlantic relationship has never been a stable whether in convergence or in divergence, therefore academic researchers were divided into two camps; pessimistic and optimistic. The pessimistic camp, led by Robert Kagan, Philip Gordon, Jeremy Shapiro, William C. Wohlforth, Micheal Cox, and Charles A. Kupchan, referred to tendency of the transatlantic policies to be in a mounting divergence and in a quagmire. Therefore, transatlantic divergences are highly anticipated due to diverse rationales such as different capabilities, cultures, historical backdrops, tools of actions, and threats perception. On the contrary, the optimistic camp, led by Thomas Risse, Pouliot Vincent, Ingo Peters, and Erdal Onat, admitted the difficulties that the transatlantic relations face but referred to the propensity of the transatlantic policies to converge once lessons learned. Therefore, transatlantic convergences are highly predictable due to the mutual transatlantic interdependence, the shared institutions, values, and interests.

Nearly all of the alternative theoretical frameworks, used to analyze transatlantic policies, made a combination between theories to explain the transatlantic cooperation and conflict in the Middle East. For instance, whereas Adrian Hyde-Price employed the structural realist theory, Stephen Wood used realism and liberalism to explain the transatlantic policies with respect to Iraq. Andres Wivel employed the structural realist theory to explain European reaction to the United States' unilateralism in Iraq and he made distinctions hard balancing and soft balancing and hard bandwagoning and soft bandwagoning strategies. Judith Kelley used another concept 'strategic non-cooperation' to illustrate the European soft balancing with the United States over the Iraq war. John Peterson and Mark A. Pollack relied on realism (international developments) and on liberalism (political changes within Europe and the U.S) to analyze the state of transatlantic relationship. Lastly, Henarry A. Nau combined between the realist theory (different threat perception) and the constructivist theory (historical experiences) and liberalist theory (different party affiliation within both the U.S and the European governments) to explain the state of transatlantic relations.

Anchored in the fact that there is no significant approach in itself, but rather in its explanatory power, the thesis relied on a multidimensional approach that combines neo-realism, neo-liberalism, and constructivism to explain reasons for convergences and divergences in the transatlantic policies towards Middle East issues.

Chapter Two:

Divergent Perceptions, tools of Action, Convergent Interests: Transatlantic Strategies and Priorities in Middle East Issues

European and American interests do not always coincide and that, even when overall objectives are generally very similar, there are different conceptions of the way to achieve them.

Sven Biscop¹

According to Sven Biscop the American National Security Strategy (NSS) and the European Security Strategy (ESS) perceive the world differently, even though they share similar if not identical threats. Biscop also quotes a diplomat to point out the differences "according to the American document, the world is dangerous; according to the European document, the world is complex".

In international security issues, there is wholesale divergence [between the United States and Europe], drawing no doubt on very different readings on the seriousness of threats to security and what to do about them.

Ginsberg H. Roy²

Ginsberg H. Roy contends that when it comes to third countries and regions transatlantic policies converge and diverge.

These two quotes exemplify that transatlantic allies strategically converge over the general objectives but diverge over the perceptions of the threats and the most appropriate technique to address them. The Middle East lies at the heart of the transatlantic strategies and priorities.

¹ Sven Biscop, *the European Security Strategy: A Global Agenda for Positive Power* (England: Ashgate Publishing Limited, 2005), 110.

² Ginsberg H. Roy, "United States- European Union Political Relations in the Bush Administration" (paper presented in the Sixth Biennial World Congress of the European Community Studies Association. Brussels, December 5-6.2002), 7-8.

▪ Introduction:

Undoubtedly, the events of 11 September 2001 represented a turning point in the American foreign policy. Some scholars have depicted these events as "the start of a new era in American strategic thinking" and compared their effects on United States' foreign policy to "the Pearl Harbor attacks on December 7, 1941" that pushed the United States to get involved in World War II.³ Not only did the events of September 11 lead to radical changes in United States' strategies towards the entire world but they also gave the Bush administration and the president's neo-conservative team a pretext for a new agenda to remap the world according to American views. The buzzword and the slogan of this agenda were "war on terror," combined with "unilateral and militaristic" tendencies. On the other side, Europe was mainly engaged in its integration process, for example "enlarging and deepening," and it opted for multilateral approaches to face threats.⁴ In other words, while the United States was global in its vision to the world's threats, particularly in its new slogan "war on terror," Europe was regional in its attitude. In addition, "the unilateral and militaristic" American foreign policy and the multilateral and civilian European foreign policy have exacerbated their differences in perceiving security issues and interests across the Atlantic.⁵

In order to fully grasp the strategic thinking of the United States and Europe regarding Middle East issues, this chapter firstly traces the historical background of transatlantic policies regarding Middle East. Secondly, it examines the official National Security Strategy of the United States (2002) in comparison to the European Security Strategy (2003): threats perception, strategic objectives, and tools of action. In addition, it sheds more light on the American national security strategy of 2006. Finally, the chapter analyses the interests, the perceptions, and the priorities of the transatlantic allies regarding Middle East issues, particularly the Palestinian-Israeli conflict, terrorism, rogue states and weapons of mass destruction.

³ Robert J. Lieber, *the American Era: Power and Strategy for the 21st Century* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2007), 25

⁴ Jean Yves- Haine, "Power without Restraint? Back to Realities," in: *Shift or Rift: Assessing US-EU relations after Iraq*, ed. Gustav Lindstrom (Paris: European Union Institute for Security Studies, Transatlantic Book, 2003), 105.

⁵ Ibid., 106.

▪ **Transatlantic Allies and Middle East: Historical Backdrop.**

In order to fully grasp transatlantic policies towards the Middle East today, historical experience is indispensable. Since the end of the World War II, transatlantic relations have been characterized by the existence of cooperation and crises, agreements and differences, and ups and downs. However, the allies have always managed to reach compromises and rapprochements after their differences in positions and policies. Accordingly, convergent and divergent policies have been a constant feature of the transatlantic alliance and the Middle East region is no exception. Therefore, the Middle East region will be examined historically in the context of the transatlantic relations since the end of the World War II.

The starting point to trace the evolution of transatlantic relations after the World War II is that Europe's integration and unity we are witnessing today would not have been achieved without the United States' overwhelming economic, political and security support. Following the sweeping victory of the United States in the World War II, it has abandoned its isolation policy and decided to actively engage in international affairs, particularly to face "the communist threat" in Western European democracies. Therefore, stabilizing and rebuilding "Western Europe" turned out to be a top priority of the United States' foreign policy. On the economic level, Western Europe, particularly Britain, suffered an economic and "financial" crisis that the Soviet Union could have used to impose its influence in Western Europe. Motivated by its interests to counter the Soviet Union's threat, in 1947, the United States launched "the Marshall Plan," a far-reaching economic project, for the destroyed Western European countries to rebuild their "devastating" economic situation.⁶ However, the Marshall plan was also politically motivated because the United States feared that "the communist parties in Western Europe" would gain political weight in both "allied countries such as France" and "defeated countries such as Italy and Germany."⁷

On the security level, Western Europe needed an American security umbrella to protect them not only from the Soviet military threat but also from the return of the balance of powers politics among Europeans themselves. For that purpose the North Atlantic Treaty Organization

⁶ Gunter Burghardt, "The European Union's Transatlantic Relations" (EU Diplomacy paper, College of Europe, Department of EU International Relations and Diplomacy Studies, 2-2006), 7.

⁷ Henry R. Nau, "Iraq and Previous Transatlantic Crisis," in: *the End of the West: Crisis and Change in the Atlantic Order*. eds. Jeffery Anderson et al, first ed. (Ithaca and London: Cornell University Press, 2008), 87.

(NATO) was established in 1949 and was considered the cornerstone of the transatlantic relations until now.⁸

Transatlantic relations since the inception of NATO have undergone many crises. Despite the seriousness of these crises, the transatlantic main alliance (NATO) and transatlantic relations were kept functional. This constant feature has been recently articulated by William I. Hitchcock in his own words:

Since [NATO] founding in 1949, members of the alliance have engaged in...[a] series of conflicts and disputes with each other, on subjects ranging from military interventions, security and defense policy, nuclear strategy, and economic and trade issues... yet after half a century, the alliance still survives and remains...the strongest and most enduring alliance in modern history.⁹

Transatlantic relations have witnessed numerous crises such as the conflict about "German rearmament in 1950-1955, the Suez crisis of 1956, the Gaullist challenge of the mid-1960s, and the alliance rift over the war in Bosnia in early 1990s".¹⁰ The Middle East region did also contribute to these crises. In fact, it formed the crux of many transatlantic debates as exemplified in the Suez crisis in 1956, the Middle East war in 1967, and the Egyptian- Israeli war of 1973. However, the Suez crisis was a test case for the emergence of the American hegemonic status on the globe in general and in the Middle East in particular. It also implied a demise of the British and French dominant status in the Middle East. When the Egyptian president Nasser nationalized the Suez Canal in 1956, a triple assault was launched by Britain, France, and Israel against Egypt without the consent of the Eisenhower's administration. At this time, the United Kingdom was "the dominant external power in the Middle East, and France the colonial power in North Africa" and both sought to change Nasser's regime in Egypt for many reasons. Not only was it perceived by France and Britain as an embodiment of "Arab radicalism,"¹¹ but it also threatened the influx of energy materials to Europe throughout the Suez

⁸ Kirsten R. Fraser, "Evaluating the Transatlantic Relationship"(A Senior Honors thesis presented in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for graduation with distinction in Political Science in the undergraduate colleges of the Ohio State University, the Ohio State University, December 2006), 8.

⁹ William I. Hitchcock, "The Ghost of Crises Past: the Troubled Alliance in Historical Perspective," in: *the End of the West: Crisis and Change in the Atlantic Order*. eds. Jeffery Anderson et al, first ed (Ithaca and London: Cornell University Press, 2008), 53.

¹⁰ Ibid., 54

¹¹ Costanza Musa and William Wallace, "The Middle East: Focus of Discord," in: *Europe, America, Bush: Transatlantic relations in the Twenty-First Century*, eds. John Peterson and Mark A. Pollack (London and New York: Routledge Taylor and Francis Group, 2003), 100.

Canal.¹² On the other hand, the United States, under the fearing that "the Arab" countries would align with the communist camp, urged the three countries to withdraw from Sinai and even threatened to use American force and economic sanctions to impose its will. Consequently, the triple states withdrew.¹³

Since the Suez crisis, and even before when the United States toppled "the Mossadeq government in Iran,"¹⁴ European countries, particularly Britain, admitted that the United States had the upper hand when it comes to dealing with the Middle East region and turned to see the region's issues from the lens of its effect on their relations with the United States.¹⁵ While Britain sought to align its policies with the United States and to preserve the special relationship, France was reluctant and called for an independent stance through intensifying the "negotiations" to create "the European Economic community in 1957" and opting for an independent security "nuclear deterrence" in 1960.¹⁶ Furthermore, France under de Gaulle's leadership was a thorn in transatlantic relations. De Gaulle sought to counterbalance the United States in the transatlantic alliance by creating "a Franco-German" axis through the Elsie "treaty of friendship" between Germany and France in 1963, and even rejecting "the British application" to become a member in the European Economic Community. De Gaulle also pulled the French participation out from "the integrated military command" of NATO in 1966 because he feared to lose the French national sovereignty, wanted an autonomous foreign policy, and he lost confidence in the United States as a leader in the transatlantic alliance following the Vietnam War in 1964.¹⁷

The hegemonic status of the United States in the Middle East was further reinforced by the "withdrawal of British" troops "from the Arabian-Persian Gulf and the American maritime and Ariel force in the "Eastern Mediterranean and the Indian Ocean". However, a turning point in transatlantic positions took place by the "Middle East war 1967". In a sense, the French position shifted from the complete support of Israel to "a pro-Arab stance," whereas the United States took the helm in providing the unconditional "political, financial and military support of

¹² William I. Hitchcock, "The Ghost of Crises Past: the Troubled Alliance," 60.

¹³ Ibid., 61.

¹⁴ Musa, "The Middle East: Focus of Discord," 103.

¹⁵ William Drozdiak, et.al., "Partners in Frustration: Europe, the United States and the Broader Middle East" (Policy paper, the Atlantic Council of the United States, September 2004), 2, <http://www.ciaonet.org/pbei/acus/drw01/drw01.pdf>

¹⁶ Hitchcock, "The Ghost of Crises Past: the Troubled Alliance," 62.

¹⁷ Ibid., 62- 66.

Israel".¹⁸ This noticeable shift was clearly by "the 1973 Middle East war". While the United States not only supported Israel politically but also built a military bridge to help Israel in the war, the European countries "launched a Euro- Arab Dialogue" against the wishes of the United States.¹⁹ However, European national differences were clear in this war: Whereas France was "critical to Israeli actions", the Netherlands and Denmark aligned with the Israeli stance, and Britain launched "an embargo on the arms exports to the Middle East". Many other European countries such as Germany and Italy remained neutral. With the decision of the Arab petroleum countries to use petroleum as a weapon against the European states that supported Israel, European states aligned more closely with the Arab side in the war.²⁰ Although Europe launched economic ties with some of the Middle East countries such as Israel and Egypt in 1977, it never challenged the American primacy in the region. This American dominance over the Middle East and European economic support to the American projects is demonstrated in the words of Constanza Musa:

Successive US administrations made it clear that it was for Washington to define western security and political priorities towards the region, and for its European partners to provide support, and if necessary financial assistance.²¹

Despite these transatlantic crises, transatlantic relations were immune against a real split and NATO was the bedrock of transatlantic allies in the face of the Soviet threat. Yet, European countries devoted their concrete effort to the European Economic integration and left the security issues to the United States. By the end of the Cold War and the collapse of the Soviet Union, "transformations of geopolitical environment" emerged: the common threat that united the transatlantic alliance (NATO) had vanished; the United States emerged as a unipolar power; Europe's Economic integration process was accelerating and its political role was increasing; "new security threats" faced transatlantic allies such as "international terrorism, proliferation of weapons of mass destructions, failed states, regional conflicts, the first Gulf war and the Balkan war."²² In addition, the European Community turned into the European Union with a pillar of common foreign and security policy after the Maastricht treaty in 1992 that sought to have a

¹⁸ Musa, "The Middle East: Focus of Discord," 100.

¹⁹ Ibid., 100.

²⁰ Maria Gianniou, "The Policies of the Mediterranean EU Countries towards the Israeli- Palestinian Conflict: Leaders or Followers" (paper prepared for "The Euro-Mediterranean Partnership (EMP): Perspectives from the Mediterranean EU Countries, 25-27 October 2007), 4.

²¹ Musa, "The Middle East: Focus of Discord," 100.

²² Burghardt, "The European Union's Transatlantic Relations," 11.

more political and strategic role of the EU globally; particularly in the Mediterranean by launching Barcelona process in 1995; both the European Union and NATO started the eastern enlargement to contain the Eastern and Central European countries in their structures.²³ Despite all these developments, the "pattern" of transatlantic relations towards the Middle East remained the same. The United States remained the only real actor when it comes to "political and security" issues, whereas the European member states resorted to its attractive economic model to have a political say in Middle East issues, particularly in the Palestinian-Israeli conflict.²⁴

On the European level, European member states faced the nightmare of the Kosovo war in the early 1990s and the initial reluctance of the United States to engage in it. With the new threats coming from Central and Eastern European states, the EU decided to push for a more solid and coherent European Common Foreign Policy (ECFP) and a European Security and Defence Policy (ESDP) as a part of the Maastricht Treaty. However, this was "limited" because of the adherence of each European state to its sovereignty, particularly Britain, which considered that this would undermine the transatlantic alliance (NATO). Accordingly, the ESDP was nothing but an ink on paper until Britain dropped its rejection to it in 1998 by signing "the Saint Malo Declaration" between France and Britain which gave a great momentum to the ESDP. Yet, Britain insisted that ESDP must be compatible with NATO and that the EU intervenes only when the United States does not want to engage.²⁵ These developments were met by high skepticism and concerns from the United States and it announced three conditions to accept the European ambition to construct ESDP. The first is "no decoupling" which means that Europeans should not leave the mainstream of NATO. The second is "no duplication" of NATO capabilities. The third is "no discrimination" as a way to guarantee "the interests of the NATO's non-EU members" in the decision-making process.²⁶

On the institutional level, the EU and the US took a step forward by conducting "the 1990 Transatlantic Declaration". For the first time, this declaration included "the principles of EU-US cooperation and consultation in a single and comprehensive formal document". It was further developed in "the New Transatlantic Agenda" (NTA) of 1995 to cope with the turning of the

²³ Mohamed Metawe, "The ESDP and the Eastern Enlargement of the EU," trans, (Occasional paper, Cairo University, Faculty of Economics and Political Science, the Center for European Studies, 1/7/2005), 2-3.

²⁴ Musa, "The Middle East: Focus of Discord," 105.

²⁵ Marie Curie, "The Influence of the War in Iraq on Transatlantic Relations," (SEI Working paper no. 79, Sussex European Institute, 2002-2003), 7-9, <http://www.sussex.ac.uk/sei/documents/wp79.pdf>.

²⁶ Ibid., 12-13.

European Community in to the European Union "under the Maastricht treaty," particularly with the second pillar of the European Union (European Foreign and Security Policy). This New Transatlantic agenda provides a cornerstone in European American institutional relations:

Until today, the NTA represents the most comprehensive constitutional basis of EU-US cooperation. It provides an institutionalized framework for official EU-US interactions: regular meetings at the Presidential, Ministerial and working levels.²⁷

On the political level, the United States turned into "a hyper puissance" following the collapse of the Soviet Union. This coincided with concerns in the European member states of the aggressive diplomacy of the United States in many international issues, particularly in the Middle East. These concerns were exacerbated by the increasing gap in the military budget and "technological" equipment in favor of the United States in an unprecedented way and the increasing tendency of the United States under the Clinton administration to use its "military force" without consulting its European counterparts, which was later on called "assertive multilateralism". Cases of such American assertive multilateralism were highly evident in the Middle East. For instance, the United States in collaboration with Britain launched small-scale "military strikes against Iraq and Sudan in 1998 without consulting its European allies. Moreover, while many European countries participated in Operation Allied Force against Kosovo and Serbia in 1999, their participation did not exceed providing legitimacy to the United States; because the war was launched with no mandate from the United Nation Security Council.²⁸ In other words, the United States tended not to consult with the European states at the same time it tended to secure their political support to secure legitimacy to its actions.

A sea change took place in transatlantic relations with the election of President George W. Bush in January 2001. Unlike the Clinton's administration, which pursued multilateral actions that calmed down European concerns in the 1990s, the Bush administration adopted a unilateral tendency in international affairs mixed with "an unapologetic exercise of American Power" to secure the "American primacy" in the "American century". The Bush administration did not hide its disdain for international law when it rejected numerous international accords such as the Kyoto Protocol, the International Criminal Court, and the ABM treaty. It also gave less significance to NATO and adopted an "aggressive diplomacy". All these actions and announcements were

²⁷ Burghardt, "The European Union's Transatlantic Relations," 11-12.

²⁸ Simon Duke, "The Hyper Power and the Hype: Reassessing Transatlantic Relations in the Iraqi Context" (Working paper no.13, European Institute of Public Administration, 2003), 5.

highly provocative to the European member states and threatened the coherence of transatlantic relations.²⁹

Although the attacks of September 11 2001 led to an unprecedented European "solidarity" with the United States and willingness to fully collaborate in facing international terrorism, the United States preferred to act unilaterally and to use its military power to respond to these threats. Even though the United States launched the war on Afghanistan with the support of the Europeans, this support was more political than military; and the United States refused to resort to NATO and preferred to act by its leadership. The Middle East came to the center of these transatlantic tensions when the Bush administration announced its broader vision for the region in the metaphor of the "axis of evil" in January 2002. This metaphor associated "Iraq, Iran, and North Korea" with the nightmare triangle of "WMD, terrorism," and rogue states. However, the United States' explicit desire to launch another war on Iraq heavily antagonized its European allies and exacerbated the cleavage and turned it into an unprecedented transatlantic rift.³⁰

Following the American invasion of Iraq in 2003 and the reelection of George W. Bush in 2004, attempts to heal the rifts were mutually conducted on both sides of the Atlantic. From the American side, the administration's adventure in Iraq and the security challenges in Afghanistan have put the United States on the brink of "military, financial and moral overstretch".³¹ Even though the Bush administration stuck to its ideological principles, pragmatic considerations such as the need for Europe to bear some of the costs of the reconstruction process in Iraq and Afghanistan and the need for legitimacy have pushed the administration to conduct a conciliatory policy towards its European allies. From the European side, a lesson was drawn from the rift between Europe and the United States and even among Europeans themselves. Obviously, the failure of the United States in Iraq would have had negative repercussions on the European Union and Europe should cooperate with the United States in order to have a say in the arrangements of the post-invasion. However, this did not mean the absence of divergences among transatlantic allies. For instance, there were differences over the

²⁹ Greg Caplan, "Transatlantic Relations and the Middle East: Partnership or Rivalry?" (The American Jewish Committee, Transatlantic Institute, May 2004), 5, <http://www.transatlanticinstitute.org/medias/publications/181.pdf>.

³⁰ Musa, "The Middle East: Focus of Discord," 110-112.

³¹ Burghardt, "The European Union's Transatlantic Relations," 17.

supposed role of the United Nation in Iraq, the reconstruction process, and NATO's role in Iraq.³²

By the end of 2008, two historical earthquakes simultaneously took place within the United States. The first was a political phenomenon known as the Barak Obama's revolution. Obama won the presidential election with a completely different agenda than that of his predecessor. The second earthquake was the financial and economic crisis which initially hit the United States and later the entire world. Obama's victory was highly welcomed and long-awaited in Europe after eight years of stressed transatlantic relations even though Bush's second term witnessed some pragmatic but not principal cooperation.³³ The reasons for European optimism about transatlantic relations when Obama came to power were his distinctive attitude that explicitly announced that multilateralism and cooperation with the United States' allies is the only guarantee to face the formidable challenges and to restore the American clout all over the globe. Obama even used the metaphor of bringing together both "the hard and soft power" of the United States in a reference to the significance of diplomacy side by side with military tools. Obama declared his intentions to arrange "a responsible and phased" pull out from Iraq, and his willingness to conduct unconditioned negotiations with Iran over its nuclear program, and his desire to pave the way for a permanent solution to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict.³⁴

In conclusion, the history of transatlantic relations in the Middle East reflects the reality that this region has been – and still is - a major source of convergence and divergence. It also shows that the United States since the end of the World War II was and still is the dominant power that sets the agenda in the Middle East, whereas European member states have been trying to use their economic leverage to gain a more political role. However, the different national European interests in the Middle East, particularly among the big member states, have always prevented the European Union from taking a unified stance. Whereas France thought to balance the American and Soviet influence in the Middle East, Germany supported the superiority of the United States in the region, and Britain opted for special relations with the United States at the expense of the European Union. This metaphor of Europeanism versus Atlanticism has been

³² Ibid., 17.

³³ Sven Biscop, "President Obama, Europe and the Middle East," *Israel Journal of Foreign Affairs* III, no.1 (2009):1.

³⁴ John K. Glenn, "Foreign Policy Challenges for the Obama Administration" (Swedish Institute for European Policy Studies, European Policy Analysis, January. Issue 1.2009), 2-4, <http://www.sieps.se/en/publications/european-policy-analysis/foreign-policy-challenges-for-theobamaadministration.html>.

even furthered by the Eastern enlargement of both NATO and the EU, because the new member states in the EU considered the United States and NATO as the real security guarantee, whereas they perceived the EU as an oasis of economic prosperity and welfare. The history of transatlantic relations in the Middle East also alludes to divergent strategic thinking about the region, despite the American and European common interests. This divergence in strategic thinking was very much evident during the George W. Bush's two terms. However, pragmatic transatlantic convergence was also evident, especially in Bush's second term.

▪ **Transatlantic Strategies: Convergent Aims, Divergent Tools.**

To compare the American and European security strategies, we should firstly consider the context and the circumstances through which these strategies were conducted. The American National Security Strategy (NSS 2002) was a direct response to the sense of vulnerability and the direct threat of terrorism which reached its peak in the September 11 trauma. For many decades, "containment and deterrence" were used as strategic options to face threats. However, the terrorist attacks on the twin towers proved the inefficiency of these strategies to face new terrorist threats. The Bush administration was prompted to formulate a revolutionary strategy that lives up to the new terrorist threat that neither containment nor deterrence strategies can face. Accordingly, "preemption" a new strategic tool, was invoked as the driving force behind what was later called a revolution in American strategic attitudes.³⁵

In addition, the NSS 2002 was a reflection on an assertive American administration that opted for the primacy of the hegemonic and incomparable power of the United States in the entire world. The timing of the NSS 2002 made sense because it was formally released on September 20, 2002. The announcement of the strategy was just six months before the invasion of Iraq in March 2003. At this time, the actual military preparations for the war were accelerated and attempts to persuade the American public of the necessity of the war for the US's security were simultaneously launched. The Iraq regime represented the case for fighting the three combined threats of "terrorism, tyrants, and technologies of mass destruction" introduced by the

³⁵ Ivo H. Daalder and James M. Lindsay, *America Unbound: the Bush Revolution in Foreign Policy*. 2nd ed. (New Jersey and Canada: John Wiley and Sons, Inc., Hoboken, 2005), 120.

American strategy.³⁶ Therefore, the crux of the NSS was that America was launching a "Global war on Terrorism" which entailed new and robust tools of action.³⁷

Unlike the NSS, the European security strategy (ESS) was "the first official EU document" that attempted to combine wide and different European strategic interests into one united strategy accepted by all EU member states.³⁸ The terrorist attacks on the twin towers, the United States' invasion of Iraq in March 2003 and the severe divide between Europe and the United States and among European states themselves, the NSS in September 2002, and the European desire to actively engage in the global world have all prompted European states to opt for a unified strategic vision that defines the threats and the appropriate tools to face them. For these reasons, European states entrusted the High Representative of Common Foreign and Security Policy, Javier Solana, to draft a European Security Strategy.³⁹ More importantly, the ESS was a robust attempt to build a more coherent and capable European "hard power" to play a more effective international role.⁴⁰

The incentives and interests among European states to draw up strategic vision were not necessarily the same. Some European countries, like France, tended to assert a distinguished and "an alternative" European perspective that differs from the United States. Other European states, like the United Kingdom, opted for "aligning European priorities" to the United States' National Security Strategy. Other European States, like Germany, simultaneously attempted to mend the rifts that took place in the transatlantic partnership, maintain the essence of transatlantic cooperation and conduct a European response to the new threats facing the continent.⁴¹

On the contextual level, the two texts are very different regarding "the length, the depth, the language, and the tone". The ESS (15 pages) is half of the NSS's (32pages) length. The ESS's language is rather vague and not detailed while the NSS's language is specific, articulated and more detailed in its aims and tools.⁴² The NSS's language is more determined to use the U.S.

³⁶ Ibid., 121.

³⁷ Constanze Stelzenmuller, "Transatlantic Power Failures: America and Europe, Seven Years after 9-11: Hard Power Humbled, Soft Power Exposed, and A Looser, More Pragmatic Relationship" (Brussels Forum paper Series, The German Marshall Fund of The United States, 2008), 3.

³⁸ Sebastian Berenskoetter Felix, "Mapping the Mind Gap: A Comparison of US and European Security strategies," *Security Dialogue* 36, no. 1 (2005):72.

³⁹ Seven Biscop, *the European Security Strategy: A Global Agenda for Positive Power* (England: Ashgate Publishing Limited, 2005), 12.

⁴⁰ Stelzenmuller, "Transatlantic Power Failures: America and Europe," 13.

⁴¹ Biscop, *the European Security Strategy*, 13.

⁴² Felix, "Mapping the Mind Gap: US and European strategies," 73.

power and "to act aggressively," while, the ESS can be depicted as "descriptive and ambiguous". The tone of the two strategies is also not the same. The ESS's tone reflects a desire to use a mixture of diplomatic and economic tools and "military action as a last resort" particularly in the failed states and in the post-war operations, while the NSS's tone reflects the American administration to use its predominant military force as the main if not the first tool to counter the new threats.⁴³

Threat Perception: Terrorism, WMD, Rogue States, Regional Conflicts, Organized Crime.

Both the NSS and the ESS have the same comprehensive vision of security. The ESS starts by associating the internal security with the external security: "The post Cold War environment is one of increasingly open borders in which the internal and external aspects of security are indissolubly linked".⁴⁴ The NSS has the same vision of linking between domestic and international affairs: "Today, the distinction between domestic and foreign affairs is diminishing. In a globalized world, events beyond America's borders have a greater impact inside them".⁴⁵ The NSS defines the triangle nightmare of "international terrorism, rogue states, and weapons of mass destruction" as the ultimate challenge and threat to the United States. Yet, the NSS defines many other threats, for example the competition with "great powers" such as China and Russia, "the arms race," regional conflicts," and the threat of "poverty in developing countries". However, all of the above-mentioned threats are handled according to the way they affect the combined threat of "terrorism-tyrants-WMDs".⁴⁶

The first paper of the NSS contains a reference to the changing nature of the threats from states to non-state actors and even to individuals who have access to technology: "we are menaced less by fleets and armies than catastrophic technologies in the hands of the embittered few".⁴⁷ The ESS, on the other hand, defines "global challenges" such as "poverty, diseases, and hunger" and five "key threats: terrorism, proliferation of Weapons of Mass Destruction, regional conflicts, state failure, and organized crimes".⁴⁸ The NSS also defines those threats: "terrorism,

⁴³ Carsten Helmut Jahnel, "Transatlantic Relations- Are Alliances A Function of An External Threat?." (Thesis Submitted in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the Degree of Master of Arts in National Security Affairs. Naval Postgraduate School, June 2005), 32,

<http://www.dtic.mil/cgi-bin/GetTRDoc?Location=U2&doc=GetTRDoc.pdf&AD=ADA435871.html>.

⁴⁴ "A Secure Europe in a Better World- The European Security Strategy," The Council of the European Union, 2.

⁴⁵ "National Security Strategy of the United States of America," the White House, 2002, 31.

⁴⁶ Felix, "Mapping the Mind Gap: US and European strategies," 78.

⁴⁷ "National Security Strategy of the United States of America," the White House, 2002, 1.

⁴⁸ "A Secure Europe in a Better World," 2-4.

regional conflicts, proliferation of WMD, promoting effective democracies and effective trade".⁴⁹ Both the ESS and the NSS agree that terrorism and the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction are major threats to both the United States and Europe. The ESS defines the most severe threat when the two threats are combined together:

The most frightening scenario is one in which terrorist groups acquire weapons of mass destruction. In this event, a small group would be able to inflict damage on a scale previously possible only for states and armies.⁵⁰

However, both Europe and the United States differ in the appropriate way for preserving the nature and sources of the same threats. The NSS states that the United States is in a state of war against terrorism "The war against terrorists of global reach is a global enterprise of uncertain duration".⁵¹ The ESS considers terrorism as a significant threat but Europe is not in a state of war as the United States claims. In addition, the NSS and the National Strategy for Combating Terrorism (NSCT), which was released in 2003, defines terrorism as "premeditated, politically motivated violence against innocents" without giving more emphasis to the reasons behind it. The NSS and the NSCT argue that the main reasons for terrorism emanate from states and regions outside the civilized and western world. In other words, terrorism, according to the American perception, is the result of the absence of freedom in underdeveloped societies, particularly in "Muslim societies".⁵² The profound sources for terrorism, according to the United States, are dictatorships and authoritarian systems which lead to "poverty, instability, corruption, and suffering".⁵³

The ESS has a broader and deeper definition of terrorism as a worldwide phenomenon. Although it associates terrorism with the "religious extremists," it clearly states more "complex" reasons for the phenomenon and does not confine it to "uncivilized" societies as the American strategy did:

These [causes] include the pressures of modernization, cultural, social and political crises, and the alienation of young people living in foreign societies. This phenomenon [of terrorism] is also a part of our own society.⁵⁴

⁴⁹ Anna I. Zakharchenko, "The EU and U.S. Strategies against Terrorism and Proliferation of WMD: A Comparative Study" (Occasional paper Series no.6, European Center for Security Studies, George C. Marshall, January 2007), 7.

⁵⁰ "A Secure Europe in a Better World," 4.

⁵¹ "National Security Strategy of the United States of America," the First paper in the Preamble.

⁵² Felix, "Mapping the Mind Gap: US and European strategies," 78.

⁵³ Zakharchenko, "EU and U.S. Strategies against Terrorism and Proliferation," 20.

⁵⁴ "A Secure Europe in a Better World," 3.

Accordingly, the EU explicitly argues that terrorism not only comes from the "uncivilized" and authoritarian world, but also emanates from within the European societies themselves. "Europe is both a target and a base for... terrorism".⁵⁵ The ESS considers that the five key threats to the European Union may be a breeding ground for terrorism, in the sense that keeping regional conflicts unsolved, and not helping failed states breeds motives for terrorism and a desire to acquire weapons of mass destruction, and even getting into a nuclear arms race, particularly in "the Middle East".⁵⁶ The NSS perceives terrorism as an "external threat", whereas the ESS considers it as an "external and internal threat". In addition, the EU's societies have a large portion of Muslims unlike the United States. Besides, the history of terrorist attacks on Europe is very extended and Europe has a long experience in addressing terrorism, that is why the EU has "a management approach to terrorism," while the US has "an elimination approach". In other words, the European Union can live with terrorism and contain it, whereas the United States cannot but eradicate it by its military force.⁵⁷

Both the NSS and the ESS consider the proliferation of Weapons of Mass Destruction as a major threat. However, the NSS perceives this threat as part and parcel of its whole strategy to counter terrorism; whereas, the ESS perceives this threat separately from terrorism. Besides, the EU attributes one of the most important causes for proliferation of weapons of mass destruction to the frozen and unsolved regional conflicts which feed the regional instability and incite states to acquire WMD. On the other hand, the NSS does not consider "regional instability" as a cause for states to seek WMD.⁵⁸ Both the United States and the EU issued separate "supplementary documents" about WMD, namely the US National Strategy to Combat Weapons of Mass Destruction (December 2002), the EU Security Strategy Against Proliferation of Weapons of Mass Destruction (December 2003), and the EU WMD Action Plan.⁵⁹ The major difference between the ESS and the NSS lies in the fact that the American documents argue that the threat is more linked to "the intentions of bad actors mainly rogue states": "Today, our enemies see weapons of mass destruction as weapons of choice. For rogue states these weapons are tools of

⁵⁵ Ibid., 3.

⁵⁶ Ibid., 3-4.

⁵⁷ Zakharchenko, "EU and U.S. Strategies against Terrorism and Proliferation," 19.

⁵⁸ Ibid., 25- 27.

⁵⁹ The US National Strategy to Combat Weapons of Mass Destruction (December 2002) and the EU Security Strategy against Proliferation of Weapons of Mass Destruction (December 2003), and the EU WMD Action Plan.

intimidation and military aggression against their neighbors".⁶⁰ The ESS and the ESWMD pay no attentions to the intentions of actors but rather give more significance to the proliferation control regimes and argue that the threat comes out of the states which are "outside the international control regimes, including western states".⁶¹

The NSS linked between rogue states and terrorism. On a constant basis, it defines rogue states as states that harbor terrorists, abuse their peoples for the sake of the ruling elites, show no respect for international legitimacy, seek to possess weapons of mass destruction, and, most importantly, hate the United States and all its values and principles. Accordingly, the United States should act preemptively against rogue states before they even can develop their capabilities to be able to attack the United States and its allies.⁶² In this sense, the NSS attributes the danger of these states to "the deviant behavior of tyrants".⁶³ This was clearly identified by President George W. Bush when he declared Iran, Iraq, and North Korea as "an axis of evil". These countries, according to Bush, are motivated to acquire nuclear power to "blackmail" or even attack the United States.⁶⁴ The ESS attributes the state's failures to "bad governance, corruption, abuse of power, weak institutions and lack of accountability - and civil conflict corrode States from within". Besides, it relates this threat not only to terrorism and weapons of mass destruction as the NSS does but also to "organized crime and regional instability".⁶⁵ In this sense, the absence of state authority is the major characteristic of failed states.⁶⁶ The ESS just mentioned the states that are "outside the bounds of International Society" as a reference to the states that seek to acquire nuclear power and harbor terrorism, but never used the same American term which titled them as rogue states.⁶⁷

Regional conflicts were addressed in both the NSS and the ESS but in a different weight. The ESS gave this threat more attention and strongly associated the eruption of terrorism, the states' growing desires to acquire chemical and nuclear capabilities, and even the states' failure with the roots of regional conflicts, such as the Palestinian-Israeli conflict. This was very clear in the words of the ESS; "Conflict can lead to extremism, terrorism and state failure; it provides

⁶⁰ "National Security Strategy of the United States of America," 15.

⁶¹ Felix, "Mapping the Mind Gap: US and European strategies," 80.

⁶² "National Security Strategy of the United States of America," 14.

⁶³ Felix, "Mapping the Mind Gap: US and European strategies," 81.

⁶⁴ Daalder, *America Unbound*, 119.

⁶⁵ "A Secure Europe in a Better World," 4.

⁶⁶ Felix, "Mapping the Mind Gap: US and European strategies," 81.

⁶⁷ "A Secure Europe in a Better World," 10.

opportunities for organized crime. Regional insecurity can fuel the demand for WMD".⁶⁸ In fact, regional disputes have numerous bad effects on the European continent because they jeopardize "Europe's energy supply and the flow of goods and services," cause a problem of "refuge flows" to the continent, and, most importantly, debilitate if not paralyze "the international order".⁶⁹

The NSS, to the contrary, gives "regional instability" no attention when it comes to defining why states have a desire to possess chemical and nuclear power.⁷⁰ Instead, it gives more attention to the ways of keeping regional conflicts un"escalated" and ease humanitarian disasters. Besides, it argues that democracy is the tool to solve regional conflicts, and gives the Israeli-Palestinian conflict as an example; "There can be no peace for [Palestinians and Israelis] without freedom for both sides".⁷¹ The NSS even asks the Palestinians to wipe out terrorism, decisively face corruption and follow democratic values as a prelude to solve the regional conflict.⁷² The ESS, on the other hand, argues that solving "the Arab- Israeli conflict" is a prerequisite to solve any other troubles in the Middle East:

Resolution of the Arab/Israeli conflict is a strategic priority for Europe. Without this, there will be little chance of dealing with other problems in the Middle East.⁷³

However, the ESS alludes that the "historical and deep" reasons of any conflict must be addressed⁷⁴, stating that the "most practical way to tackle the often elusive new threats will sometimes be to deal with the older problems of regional conflict".⁷⁵ Accordingly, both the ESS and the NSS diverge on the effect the Israeli-Palestinian conflict has for the breeding of terrorism. Where the ESS perceives the conflict as a major cause, the NSS considers that despotic regimes and the absence of freedom and democracy is the main cause of terrorism.⁷⁶

The ESS puts organized crime as a separate item and as a key threat that included "cross-border trafficking in drugs, women, illegal migrants and weapons" and it associates this threat with "terrorism".⁷⁷ This was not even mentioned or debated in the NSS. This implies that the EU is interested in other threats than the buzz threats (terrorism and WMD). These threats emanate

⁶⁸ Ibid., 4.

⁶⁹ Biscop, *the European Security Strategy*, 19.

⁷⁰ Zakharchenko, "EU and U.S. Strategies against Terrorism and Proliferation," 27.

⁷¹ "A Secure Europe in a Better World," 9.

⁷² Jahnel, "Transatlantic Relations- Are Alliances A Function of an External Threat?," 35.

⁷³ "A Secure Europe in a Better World," 8.

⁷⁴ Jahnel, "Transatlantic Relations- Are Alliances A Function of an External Threat?," 35.

⁷⁵ "A Secure Europe in a Better World," 4.

⁷⁶ Zakharchenko, "EU and U.S. Strategies against Terrorism and Proliferation," 20.

⁷⁷ Ibid., 4.

from its regional periphery and not from the universal focus of the NSS.⁷⁸ In fact, the European document's focus on regional conflicts and organized crime was a European attempt to signify that beside the buzz threats "terrorism and WMD", other conventional threats should not be ignored and the search for the deep reasons of these threats should not stop. The political message was that Europeans share the same concerns and threats with their ally (the United States) and give some attention to their "old threats" at the same time.⁷⁹ To conclude, Europeans and Americans share similar if not the same threats, however, they perceive them differently. In other words, they share the threats of terrorism, WMDs, the rogue and failed states, the regional conflicts, but they differ when it comes to the reasons behind those threats and the most suitable tools to handle them.

Strategic Objectives:

The NSS's core strategic objective is to maintain the ultimate dominance and superiority of the United States globally.⁸⁰ The NSS defines a number of key objectives which revolve around its broader spectrum, "the global war on terror".⁸¹ Firstly, it stipulates the inevitability of "preemptive military" strikes against rogue states and terrorist non-state actors which intend and plan to possess and even develop chemical, biological, and nuclear capabilities. In other words, the United States should use its "unbound" military force to "change regimes in rogue states".⁸² Secondly, the NSS decisively assures that the United States would not accept any attempt by any other power on the globe to challenge its superiority, particularly "its military strength".⁸³

Thirdly, it asserts a new kind of "multilateral international cooperation". The United States advocates to cooperate with other allies yet, in the same vein, it emphasizes that when it comes to its "national interests and security" it will decisively act unilaterally.⁸⁴ This is called "a cherry-picking strategy" or selective multilateralism where the United States accepts multilateralism as long as it achieves its national interests, while, at the same time, unilateralism is the decisive and the most recommended option when their interests are at stake.⁸⁵ This was

⁷⁸ Felix, "Mapping the Mind Gap: US and European strategies," 81.

⁷⁹ Biscop, *the European Security Strategy*, 19.

⁸⁰ Andres Wivel, "Explaining European Behavior in the Unipolar World Order: the Role of Institutions, Strategy and Military Action" (paper presented at the Panel 'European Security Governance', 48th Conference of the International Studies Association, Chicago, IL, USA, February 28-March 3, 2007), 20.

⁸¹ Stelzenmuller, "Transatlantic Power Failures: America and Europe," 3.

⁸² Daalder, *America Unbound*, 14.

⁸³ Lieber, *the American Era*, 43.

⁸⁴ Ibid., 44.

⁸⁵ Zakharchenko, "EU and U.S. Strategies against Terrorism and Proliferation," 10.

clear in the words of the NSS; "While the United States will constantly strive to enlist the support of the international community, we will not hesitate to act alone, if necessary, to exercise our right of self-defense by acting preemptively".⁸⁶ Fourthly, the NSS dwells on "the American internationalism," which preaches for basic principles such as "peace, prosperity and freedom," and calls for democratization and modernization around the world, particularly in the "Muslim world" and the Middle East.⁸⁷

The ESS, on the other hand, defined three strategic objectives; "addressing the threats, building security in the [European] neighborhood," and creating "an international order based on effective multilateralism".⁸⁸ To illustrate each objective in details, the ESS starts by stating the achievements of the EU in addressing the five threats (terrorism, WMD, regional conflicts, organized crime, and failed states). The objective is to build security in the European neighborhood, which is defined as the "countries and regions of Eastern Europe, the southern and Eastern Mediterranean (North Africa and Middle East), and the Southern Caucasus". The aim in the words of the document is to "promote a ring of well governed with whom [the European Union] can enjoy close and cooperative relations".⁸⁹ The EU document gives the Middle East and the Arab world more emphasis. It clearly describes the region as "the only strategic priority objective outside the European periphery" by considering "the Arab-Israeli conflict a high "priority" and the cornerstone to tackle all other threats in the region."⁹⁰ The third objective of the ESS is defending "an international order based on an effective multilateralism". The essence of this multilateralism is an empowered and well-functioning United Nations; "the fundamental framework for international relations is the United Nation Charter...strengthening the United Nations, equipping it to fulfill its responsibilities and to act effectively, is a European priority".⁹¹

In addition, the ESS calls for efficient international and regional institutions for example "the WTO, the OSCE, the Council of Europe, ASEAN, MERCOSUR and the African Union". In the same vein, it considers the "transatlantic relationship" and NATO as an embodiment of these

⁸⁶ "National Security Strategy of the United States of America," 6.

⁸⁷ Lieber, *the American Era*, 44.

⁸⁸ "A Secure Europe in a Better World," 6-9.

⁸⁹ Michael Baun, "The European Union as A Strategic Actor: Evidence, Explanation, and Consequences" (paper prepared for the Southern Political Science Association Annual Meeting January 6-8, 2005 New Orleans, Political Science Department Valdosta State University Valdosta), 5.

⁹⁰ Felix, "Mapping the Mind Gap: US and European strategies," 86.

⁹¹ "A Secure Europe in a Better World," 9.

relations, and as a basis for such effective multilateralism. Out of these "networks of regimes and institutions," the lasting European objective is "global governance", which means widespread programs of societal "reform," asserting the "rule of law and human rights". The ESS was clear that one of the consequences for the states that do not bind themselves to international order is "their relationship with the European Union".⁹² Both the ESS and the NSS adopt the "democratic peace theory" which means that peace and "security" can be achieved when the world is rampant with "democratic states".⁹³

Tools of Action: Use of Force, Preemption, and Unilateralism

Europeans would point out that possession of a hammer does not make the world into a nail; from the U.S. perspective, having a hammer allows you to make good use of nails.⁹⁴

Unlike the United States, Europe does not consider hammer (military power) the sole and the first tool of action. It is out of question that there is a military "capability gap" between Europe and the United States. The possession of force tempts great powers to use it as a tool in their foreign policies. The military force is the core of the NSS because American power was the driving force that managed to keep "peace in the past". Having that fact in mind pushes the American thinking to ask why not to do the same now and face the new dangerous threats. In fact, the NSS proclaims that it will use all the US "national and international power" that range from "military" and "law enforcement" to intelligence.⁹⁵ Indeed, the document did not hide an American tendency to use force. This pressing desire emanates from the United States' unprecedented "military strength" and its "embodiment of freedom and democracy". Accordingly, American use of force is a significant tool to remap the globe according to the American eyes.⁹⁶ This was very clear in the American announcement that it will use its military force to "change regimes in rogue states."⁹⁷

The ESS, on the other hand, asserts the complex military-civilian nature of threats and the mixture of the required tools to face them. In the words of the document "[n]one of the new threats is purely military; nor can any be tackled by purely military means. Each requires a

⁹² Biscop, *the European Security Strategy*, 17.

⁹³ Baun, "The European Union as A Strategic Actor," 5.

⁹⁴ Jeremy Shapiro and Daniel Byam, "Birding the Transatlantic Counterterrorism Gap," in: *Transatlantic Discord: Combating Terrorism and Proliferation, Preventing Crises*. eds. Franz Eder, Gerhard Mangott, and Martin Senn, (Baden-Baden: Nomos Verlagsgesellschaft, 2007), 153.

⁹⁵ Felix, "Mapping the Mind Gap: US and European strategies," 83.

⁹⁶ Daalder, *America Unbound*, 121-122.

⁹⁷ Ibid., 14.

mixture of instruments".⁹⁸ Accordingly, the European Union accepts the use of force, and even "robust intervention" but in a different context than the American text; "We need to develop a strategic culture that fosters early, rapid and when necessary, robust intervention".⁹⁹

The use of military force is clearly mentioned in the European document when it comes to "failed states" because in these states no authority can "use force" to impose the rule of law and protect civilians. Therefore, force can be used but under a UN "mandate".¹⁰⁰ The ESS states that the EU should pursue "a two-step approach" against the countries that violate the rules of "international" system. The first step is to persuade these states to become a part of the international society again and assist them to get back on track. The second step is to impose economic and political sanctions and "when necessary" military tools as a last resort. Accordingly, using force is not a priority in the European document but it can be resorted to when other steps of "conflict prevention and crisis management" fail to achieve European targets.¹⁰¹

The NSS clearly pinpoints to the fact that the United States will use its "military" capabilities to uproot terrorist organizations even before they intend to acquire destructive nuclear powers and the same applies to the states that harbor them.¹⁰² This is because the traditional strategies "deterrence and containment" are no longer efficient to face new irrational terrorists.¹⁰³ This trend to strike first, even before the threat becomes clear and certain, is decisively clarified in the words of the American document that states that "traditional concepts of deterrence will not work against a terrorist enemy". Therefore, the United States is prepared when it is crucial to the American national security to "act preemptively."¹⁰⁴ This American doctrine, which was later turned into the "Bush doctrine", was widely debated and criticized. It was debated that it is not new in American history to strike preemptively. The novel item was that it was officially declared as a "principle" in the United States' security strategy. Colin Powell attempted to alleviate the significance of this principle by mentioning that it had always been one of the key elements of United States foreign policy and Condoleezza Rice did the same

⁹⁸ "A Secure Europe in a Better World," 7.

⁹⁹ Ibid., 11.

¹⁰⁰ Biscop, *the European Security Strategy*, 28-29.

¹⁰¹ Ibid., 60.

¹⁰² Lieber, *the American Era*, 44.

¹⁰³ Daalder, *America Unbound*, 124.

¹⁰⁴ "A Secure Europe in a Better World," 15.

when she referred to the Cuban missile crisis 1962 as a historical example of pre-emption.¹⁰⁵ This principle was criticized on the grounds that the United States "publicly" announced it while it was already an "actual policy". In addition, preemption would be exploited as a pretext by other nations, such as India, Russia, and China to achieve their own interests.¹⁰⁶

The ESS admits that when faced by "terrorist networks," "conflict prevention and threat prevention cannot start too early".¹⁰⁷ Accordingly, "preventive engagement" is a European requirement but it does not mean at all a "unilateral pre-emptive military action" as the NSS decisively puts it. According to the document, this preventive engagement is mainly employed to help "failed states," while the preemptive actions are employed to rogue states. This explains why the term "pre-emptive engagement," which was in the first draft of the European document, was amended to the term "preventive engagement" as a way to distinguish its meaning from that of the American document.¹⁰⁸ There are differing conceptions of the European "conflict prevention" and the American "pre-emptive action". In a sense, conflict prevention emanates from the European long experience of preventing conflicts by attempting to reach out to the core societal reasons of conflict".¹⁰⁹ In the words of the document, "military action" was a must but just for getting "failed states back on their feet".¹¹⁰ Therefore, it was clearly stipulated that "Preemption is not an option" for the European Union. This attitude was asserted by the "EU WMD strategy". This strategy recommended, in the case of the non-compliance of states to the "political and diplomatic measures," to give a space to international institutions, particularly the "UN Security Council under Chapter eight".¹¹¹

Although both the NSS and the ESS agree that no one state can make the world "safer" or handle the universal threats alone, the NSS distinctively states that the United States are willing to "act unilaterally" even before the threat becomes imminent.¹¹² The NSS states that the United States will firstly attempt to "enlist the support of the international community" but it gives the United States the ultimate right to "act alone, if necessary" and "preemptively" when

¹⁰⁵ Daalder, *America Unbound*, 120-121.

¹⁰⁶ Ibid., 124-125.

¹⁰⁷ Felix, "Mapping the Mind Gap: US and European strategies," 85.

¹⁰⁸ Stephen Hoadey, "European and American Security Strategies: Convergent Aims, Contrasting Means," *New Zealand International Review*, Xxx1, no. 2 (2006):11.

¹⁰⁹ Felix, "Mapping the Mind Gap: US and European strategies," 85.

¹¹⁰ "A Secure Europe in a Better World," 6.

¹¹¹ Zakharchenko, "EU and U.S. Strategies against Terrorism and Proliferation," 10.

¹¹² Jahnel, "Transatlantic Relations- Are Alliances A Function of an External Threat?," 36.

American national interests are at stake.¹¹³ On the other hand, the ESS supports "an international order based on effective multilateralism" and states that "the United Nation" mandate and "transatlantic relations" are major pillars in such a multilateral order.¹¹⁴ The ESS provides "a comprehensive" approach "through dialogue, cooperation, partnership and institutionalized, rule-based multilateralism".¹¹⁵

This difference is a part of a wider difference about the use of "international organization and diplomacy; "For Americans, multilateralism is strictly a means to an end; for Europeans multilateralism remains an end in itself".¹¹⁶ Accordingly, international conventions and multilateral institutions are accepted by the United States when they are in favor of American interests but are not an option once they constrain the American ability to pursue its national interests and to face the new threats around the globe.¹¹⁷ This American conception of multilateralism was later called by Richard Hass "a la carte multilateralism". This term means that the United States does not totally abandon cooperation with "existing alliances" and can hold "informal coalitions" with them but it can also act unilaterally when it is necessary.¹¹⁸ On the other side of the fence, multilateralism is considered a cornerstone for the European "political identity".¹¹⁹

In brief, the American National Security Strategy adopted the use of the military force as a significant tool in its foreign policy against rogue states, whereas the European Security Strategy embraced a combination of civilian and militant tools of action and considered the use of military force as the last resort to enforce the rule of law and to protect civilians in failed states. In addition, the NSS officially espoused preemption as the most deterrent tool against terrorist organizations and states, whereas the ESS adopted preventive engagement to assist failed states. Finally, the NSS supported unilateralism whereas the ESS advocated the effective multilateralism as the most significant tool to face the augmented threats in the globe.

¹¹³ "National Security Strategy of the United States of America," 6.

¹¹⁴ "A Secure Europe in a Better World," 9.

¹¹⁵ Biscop, *the European Security Strategy*, 28.

¹¹⁶ Daniel W. Drezner, "Lost in Translation: the Transatlantic Divide over Diplomacy" (University of Chicago, January 2006), 4, [http:// www.danieldrezner.com/research/LostInTranslation.doc](http://www.danieldrezner.com/research/LostInTranslation.doc).

¹¹⁷ Daalder, *America Unbound*, 43.

¹¹⁸ Sonia Lucarelli, "Values, Identity and Ideational Shocks in the Transatlantic Rift," *Journal of International Relations and Development* 9, no. 3 (2006):321.

¹¹⁹ *Ibid.*, 326.

▪ The American National Security Strategy March 2006

The NSS 2006 was released in a different context, when the United States faced great challenges. It faced a deteriorating security situation in Iraq and an insurgency against the coalition troops, particularly those of the United States. It also faced domestic pressures because of the casualties in Iraq and even a decrease of domestic support where the Bush administration's popularity reached very low percentage in opinion polls.¹²⁰ In addition, the American annual budget witnessed an increasing deficit, because of the increasing cost of the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan. The deficit reached \$400 billion at the beginning of 2006. Moreover, there was a noticeable decrease of international support and legitimacy for the United States, not only because no weapons of mass destruction were found in Iraq but also because of the resentment and anti-Americanism that the Bush administration's actions created around the globe, particularly in the US European alliance.¹²¹

From the outset, the NSS 2006 supports the 2002 version that the United States is still in a state of war against terrorism: "America is at war. This is a wartime national security strategy". It also claims that the country has two cornerstones. The first is to "promote freedom, justice, and human dignity". The second is to take the helm in the lead of "a growing community of democracies" to face the threats which range from "pandemic disease, to proliferation of weapons of mass destruction, to terrorism, to human trafficking, to natural disasters". Most importantly, it admits the need for "effective multilateral efforts" but under American leadership.¹²²

The NSS 2006 takes up the doctrines of the NSS 2002 but with a more pragmatic tendency and in a more cooperative tone with its allies. In a sense, it delivers the same message of the 2002 version when it comes to "preemption" with less detail:

When the consequences of an attack with WMD are potentially so devastating, we cannot afford to stand idly by as grave dangers materialize. This is the principle and logic of preemption. The place of preemption in our national security strategy remains the same¹²³.

¹²⁰ Ingo Peters, "Cooperation, Conflict and Crisis: the Impact of the Iraq War on European-American Relations" (paper presented at the International Studies Association (ISA) Annual Conference, San Francisco, 26-29 March 2008), 18.

¹²¹ Philip H. Gordon, "The End of the Bush Revolution," *Foreign Affairs* 85, no. 4 (2006): 80.

¹²² "The National Security strategy of the United States of America March 2006": the Letter of Introduction

¹²³ *Ibid.*, 23.

What is new in the 2006 version is that it associates preemption with the right of self defense as a way to legitimize this controversial principle.¹²⁴

The same equation of threat to the United States (rogue states that harbor terrorists and seek weapons of mass destruction) was affirmed in the 2006 version:

[The United States should] deny WMD to rogue states and to terrorist allies who would use them without hesitation...the world must hold those regimes to account.¹²⁵

The main difference in the 2006 version regarding rogue states is the "shift" in attention from "Iraq and North Korea" to "Iran and Syria," charging them with supporting terrorist organizations, for instance Hezbollah, Hamas, "Al Qada and Taliban."¹²⁶ However, the major focus was given to "Iran". The American accusations to the Iranian regime exceeded its nuclear ambitions to many other proclamations for example "terrorism," a major source of "threat to Israel," a cause of hindering the "Middle East peace," a major source of unrest and instability in Iraq, and an oppressive regime to its own people.¹²⁷ In addition, the NSS 2006 gives more attention to "promotion of democracy" around the globe as this is considered the best way to ensure security for the United States. However, it does not claim the necessity to "use force for this purpose" and it only alludes to the possibility of intervening in "humanitarian "crises."¹²⁸ Moreover, the NSS 2006 is more detailed when it comes to identifying "the nature of terrorist threat". It mainly linked it to "Islamic extremism".¹²⁹ In that sense, Hamas was given attention because it was democratically elected while it is listed as "a terrorist organization" by the United States and the European Union. The American strategy made it clear that it is not enough to be elected freely to be true democratic, but the elected government must adopt many other principles to be accepted by the international community:

The elected Hamas...[has] to uphold the principles of democratic government, including protection of minority rights and basic freedom and commitment to a recurring, free, and fair electoral process...any elected government that refuses to honor these principles cannot be considered fully democratic, however it may have taken office.¹³⁰

¹²⁴ Christine Gray, "The Bush Doctrine Revised: the 2006 National Security Strategy of the USA," *Chinese Journal of International Law* 5, no. 3 (2006): 563.

¹²⁵ "The National Security strategy of the United States of America March 2006," 12.

¹²⁶ Gray, "The Bush Doctrine Revised," 555.

¹²⁷ Ibid., 555

¹²⁸ Ibid., 555

¹²⁹ Ibid., 562.

¹³⁰ "The National Security strategy of the United States of America March 2006," 5.

In conclusion, the NSS 2006 was "a more conciliatory interpretation" of the old version. It asserts the same controversial doctrines such as preemption, unilateralism when necessary, and American "leadership". However, incited by the "pragmatic turn" in United States foreign policy during Bush's second presidential term, the document sheds more light on the necessity of international collaboration, particularly with its European allies.¹³¹

▪ **Transatlantic Interests in the Middle East: Terrorism, WMD, Israel, and Oil Supplies**

[E]ven though Europe and the US have the same vital interests in the Middle East region, they do not share the same perspectives and priorities. For the US, terrorism and weapons of mass destruction constitute the primary threat to national security, while Europe sees the Israeli-Palestinian conflict as the major cause of instability in the [Middle East].¹³²

Both the United States and Europe converge when it comes to the overall and comprehensive interests in the Middle East. Both allies share the same interests, such as defeating terrorism and countering WMD, finding a resolution to the Arab-Israeli conflict, maintaining stability in the Middle East, democratizing the region as a way to counter the "Islamic extremism," ensuring the security of Israel, and guarantying the secure and persistent influx of oil.¹³³ To point out some of these common interests each should be considered in detail.

Given the vulnerability of both the United States (events of 11 September 2001) and Europe (Madrid 2004 and London 2005 attacks) to the nails of international terrorism, it turned out to be the buzz threat for both Washington and Brussels' administrations. Such a threat created an impetus for transatlantic collaboration, not only to topple the "Taliban" government in Afghanistan and uproot Al Qaeda's organization but also to pave the way for an unprecedented harmony and coordination in "intelligence "exchange of information, "extradition" measures, warrant arrests, and drying up the financial roots of terrorists.¹³⁴

Nevertheless, both allies diverge when it comes to the sources and perceptions of the threat, particularly in the Middle East. As it was mentioned above in the both American and Europeans strategies, the Americans perceive the terrorist threat as more severe than the

¹³¹ Peters, "Cooperation, Conflict and Crisis: the Iraq War," 18.

¹³² Maria Gianniou, "The Policies of the Mediterranean EU countries towards the Israeli-Palestinian Conflict: Leaders or Followers" (paper prepared for "The Euro-Mediterranean Partnership (EMP): Perspectives from the Mediterranean EU countries, 25-27 October 2007), 25.

¹³³ Kristin Archick, "European Views and Policies towards the Middle East"(CRS Report for Congress, Congressional Research Service, the Library of the Congress, Updated December 21, 2005), 1.

¹³⁴ Dalia Dassa Kaye, "Bound To Cooperate? Transatlantic Policy in The Middle East," *The Washington Quarterly* 27, no.1 (2003-2004): 180.

Europeans do. Notwithstanding, the Madrid 2004 and London 2005 terrorist attacks have played a decisive role in closing the gap in perceptions between Europe and the United States.¹³⁵ As for the sources of terrorism, the gap is still wide between Europe and the United States. Since the European Union mainly attributes the major sources of terrorism in the Middle East to the impasse of the Arab- Israeli Peace Process, which fuels extremists to retaliate, whether in the region or against American and European interests. The Bush administration, on the other hand, perceives authoritarian and despotic regimes in the region as the driving forces of terrorism because they provide the fertile soil to extremists who put the blame on the United States for giving its support to regimes that oppress their peoples.¹³⁶

Both the United States and Europe agree that the Middle East is a major source for the spread of weapons of mass destruction. This explains why both Europe and the United States issued a separate strategy to counter WMD in concurrence with their security strategies.¹³⁷ In fact, this threat was the crux of European and American intensive deliberations and tensions about the "United Nation Security Council Resolution 1441 calling for the disarmament of Iraq in 2002," before the United States unilaterally decided to invade Iraq under the pretext of its possession of Weapons of Mass Destruction. In addition, the Iranian nuclear program has caused "a growing convergence" between Europe and the United States on the WMD's threat regardless of the best way to tackle it where each side has a distinct approach: Americans opt for "containment and use of force," while Europeans opt for "engagement."¹³⁸

Although their policies may not be the same, both the United States and Europe have "a pivotal" interest to solve the Palestinian-Israeli conflict. Europe considers "the resolution of the conflict a top priority", because it is the wide gate through which all other problems and threats in the Middle East, such as terrorism, instability, WMDs, can be solved. The Bush Administration considers democratization in the Arab world and particularly in the Palestinian authority the key to solve the conflict.¹³⁹ As a consequence of the Bush administration's hands off policy, in his first days in the White House, a "Middle East Quartet (composed of the United States, the EU, the UN, and Russia)" was established in 2002 to pursue the road map plan. This

¹³⁵ Archick, "European Views and Policies towards the Middle East," 3-4.

¹³⁶ An analysis out of the readings of the two American and European Security Strategies.

¹³⁷ For more details see the two documents: The American Strategy to Combat Weapons of Mass Destruction, December 2002 and the Council of the European Union, EU Strategy against Proliferation of Weapons of Mass Destruction, December 2003.

¹³⁸ Kaye, "Bound To Cooperate?," 180-181.

¹³⁹ Archick, "European Views and Policies towards the Middle East," 11.

Quartet has given the Europeans the more "political" role they have always sought in the peace process. Whereas the United States accepted "the Two-state solution", the Europeans adopted the United States call for "Palestinian reform".¹⁴⁰

Both the United States and Europe have the same interest in a stable and continuous influx of oil and in a "reasonable price". However, the degree of dependency of the United States on the Middle East's oil is less than that of the European Union. Europe depends on the Middle East's oil to secure "half" of its needs while the United States "imports less than 20 percent of its oil and gas from the Middle East."¹⁴¹ In addition, preserving the security of Israel has been a longstanding interest of the United States since its establishment in 1948. This intrinsic interest is mainly attributed to their "shared historical, religious, and cultural relationship". The same applies to the European Union and all its member states which have always affirmed the very right of Israel to exist in peace, and the security of its borders, and to live in peace.¹⁴²

Moreover, the United States has a broader interest to keep its hegemonic power over the region and not to allow "any single power" to dominate the Middle East whether it was from the outside such as the former Soviet Union in the past or the European member states such as Germany and France or even from the region itself such as Iran.¹⁴³ On the other hand, because of "Europe's proximity" to the Middle East it has a pivotal interest to stop the ill-immigrants coming from this region to Europe. Besides, "the historical, geographical and commercial" relations between European states for example between "Germany, France, and the United Kingdom" and the Middle East created "special interest" between each European country and a part of the region: "German-Iranian, French-Iraq and Britain-Gulf state relations."¹⁴⁴ Another interest of the European Union is to become "an acceptable regional and international actor," particularly in the Middle East.¹⁴⁵

¹⁴⁰ Ibid., 183.

¹⁴¹ Erdal Onat, "Tension and Cooperation in Transatlantic Relations With Regard To Iraq" (A Thesis Submitted to the Gradual School of Social Sciences of Middle East Technical University, June 2005), 21, <http://etd.lib.metu.edu.tr/upload/12606187/index.pdf>.

¹⁴² Michael Maffie and Steve Mancuso, "Engaging the Middle East"(Controversy paper for the CEDA Topic Committee, March 1, 2007), 8.

¹⁴³ Onat, "Tension and Cooperation in Transatlantic Relations,"19.

¹⁴⁴ Ibid., 21.

¹⁴⁵ Gianniu, "The Policies of the Mediterranean EU Countries," 12.

▪ Transatlantic Perceptions and Priorities in the Middle East

Even though the transatlantic allies' agree on the threats coming from the Middle East, such as terrorism, weapons of mass destruction, and rogue states, they diverge on their perceptions of such threats, and on their priorities regarding appropriate ways for each part to tackle the Middle East issues. For instance, in 2003, while the United States' first priority was to fight "terrorism and to prevent the spread of weapons of mass destructions," particularly the threat coming from "the Iraq" regime, many European countries opted for more attention to "the Israeli- Palestinian peace process".¹⁴⁶

From a historical backdrop, both Europe and the United States had different "historical experiences" in the Middle East. The United States is the spiritual father of the establishment of the state of Israel in the Middle East as a smaller model of the American states. It was the first state that recognized and legitimized Israel once it declared statehood in 1948. Following the Second World War, it was the rise of the American empire versus the demise of the European powers, and the Middle East region was no exception. In a sense, the United States has taken the lead and the hegemonic status from France and Britain in the Middle East. Europe, on the other hand, had a long historical colonial past in the Middle East, particularly France, Germany, and Britain. In addition, the geographical proximity of Europe to the Middle East, which has led to a long history of communication and immigration, assured that Europe can better understand the cultures and the values of Middle Eastern societies.¹⁴⁷ Accordingly, the United States assumed its influence and hegemonic status in the Middle East and Europe endorsed the United States' upper hand in the region and tried to adopt its policies in the region to its relations with the United States.¹⁴⁸ Out of their different historical experience, it is important to point out the transatlantic perceptions and priorities regarding the Middle East issues, such as the Israeli- Palestinian conflict, terrorism, rogue states, and proliferation of weapons of mass destruction.

The United States perceives the Israeli- Palestinian conflict as a struggle between a democratic country (Israel) and terrorist, extremist, and undemocratic organizations such as Hamas and other Palestinian factions. Accordingly, "Israel" struggles to "survive" in "a hostile" and dangerous environment. Besides, the United States, particularly the Bush administration,

¹⁴⁶ Patrick Clawson, "US and European Priorities in the Middle East," in: *Shift or Rift: Assessing US-EU Relations after Iraq*, ed. Gustav Lindstorm (Paris: Institute for Security Studies, European Union, 2003), 127.

¹⁴⁷ Drozdiak, "Partners in Frustration: Europe, the United States," 2.

¹⁴⁸ Ibid., 3.

considers any "Palestinian" act of resistance to the Israeli occupation as terrorism, and any Israeli action as "a self-defense". Despite the fact that President George W. Bush accepted the "two-state solution" in 2002 and introduced a vision to end the conflict by the year 2005, his "deeds" did not match his rhetoric.¹⁴⁹ Europe, on the other hand, conceives the Israeli- Palestinian conflict as a "regional conflict" between two sides in which each resorts to "unacceptable" ways to impose his own will on the other. Accordingly, Europe puts the blame equally on each side for not solving "the conflict" and assures that any permanent solution must come through "negotiation and mediation".¹⁵⁰

In addition, the EU has a long-lasting perception that no sustainable and lasting peace may be achieved and no concrete assurance of Israel's security can be offered without the "creation of an independent Palestinian State". Moreover, Europe knows that the United States is the dominant player in the Middle East and that the EU cannot have a powerful say in the conflict or even in any other issues in the region without collaborating with the United States.¹⁵¹ In other words, when "European Union and European governments" attempt to conduct any action or policy in the Middle East, they estimate whether it would be antagonizing or in harmony with the United States policies and how it would affect transatlantic relations, and the Palestinian-Israeli conflict is not an exception.¹⁵² Europe admits that the United States is "the most capable" power that can reach a settlement by exerting its influence on both parts of the conflict. However, Europe due to its historical ties, geographical proximity, and its interests in the Middle East wants to have a more political leverage in solving the conflict. This European desire to have a crucial influence in the peace process emanates from its perception that this conflict is the crux of the threats coming from the Middle East, such as terrorism, weapons of mass destruction, organized crime and immigration.¹⁵³

Out of their perceptions of the conflict, Europeans and Americans have different priorities. The United States contends that the priority in solving this conflict is to provide a suitable and democratic sphere in the region and among Israelis and Palestinians to conduct "negotiations". Europeans prefer a final "resolution of the conflict". Europeans call for a decisive

¹⁴⁹ Martin Ortega, "The Achilles Heel of Transatlantic Relations," in: *Shift or Rift: Assessing US-EU Relations after Iraq*, ed. Gustav Lindstorm (Paris: Institute for Security Studies, European Union, 2003), 156.

¹⁵⁰ Ibid., 157.

¹⁵¹ Gianniou, "The Policies of the Mediterranean EU Countries," 24.

¹⁵² Rosemary Hollis, "Europe, the US and the Middle East: Where Do We Go From Her?," March 24, 2004, 1.

¹⁵³ Ortega, "The Achilles Heel of Transatlantic Relations," 157.

role of the United States to impose a solution on both sides, particularly on Israel, when negotiations reach an impasse.¹⁵⁴ The source of the Palestinian-Israeli conflict for Europeans is the fact that Israel occupied "the Palestinian lands" in its war of 1967. Accordingly, Europe understands the motives of violence against Israel as "a natural response". However, recently most of the European member states have aligned themselves with the American perspective that violence against Israel is terrorism. The United States, on the other hand, considers that "the Arab's refusal to recognize Israel as a Jewish state" is the major source of not reaching a settlement. In addition, Americans consider that the corruption of the Palestinian authority and its leadership as the main hurdle for reaching a settlement.¹⁵⁵

Both the United States and Europe diverge when it comes to defining the "nature of terrorist threat", the most appropriate way to tackle it, and the "root causes of terrorism". Because the perpetrators of the horrible attacks of September 11 were Muslims and from the Middle East, the United States perceives this region, particularly Iraq, as the main battlefield for its ongoing war against terrorism: "For Americans, overthrowing the Ba'ath regime and fostering a democratic Iraq [is] a critical component of the struggle to defeat terrorism".¹⁵⁶ Europe, on the other hand, clearly expresses its fears that the American invasion to Iraq 2003 broadens and deepens the roots of terrorism, particularly "Islamic terrorism". This was plainly expressed by "French President Jacques Chirac" when he claimed that the war in Iraq means producing "a larger number of little bin Ladens".¹⁵⁷ However, the most striking difference in American and European perceptions of terrorism in the Middle East is that the United States does not associate its causes with the impasse of "the Palestinian-Israeli conflict", and mainly attributes the roots of terrorist attacks to the desire of extremists around the world to undermine "Western values and civilization". Accordingly, democratization of the Middle East region is the best way to uproot terrorism according to the United States, whereas the European Union and its member states attributes the major roots of terrorism to the frozen conflicts in the world, and most importantly the Middle East conflict. This explains why Europeans gives solving this conflict a high priority.¹⁵⁸

¹⁵⁴ Clawson, "US and European Priorities in the Middle East," 127-128.

¹⁵⁵ Ibid., 129-131.

¹⁵⁶ Shapiro, "Birding the Transatlantic Counterterrorism Gap," 146-147.

¹⁵⁷ Ibid., 147.

¹⁵⁸ Ortega, "The Achilles Heel of Transatlantic Relations," 156-157.

Both the United States and Europe perceive a possible link between WMD and rogue states, in the American terms and in the European terms are states outside the international community. For both Americans and Europeans a threat exacerbates when these states attempt to possess WMD. However, the United States consider rogue states as "clear and present danger," whereas Europe perceives this danger as "a mix of risks and opportunities". European states argue that depicting these states as outlawed may hinder their efforts to convince them to be bound by the international law and legitimacy. Accordingly, Europe opts for "engagement and dialogue" whereas the United States prefers "containment and isolation."¹⁵⁹ The Americans even contend that when these states seek to acquire WMD or "support terrorism," then changing these regimes by force is a decisive option. Europeans do not share the same view with the Americans and rather prefer dialogue as the best way to contain these states.¹⁶⁰

In conclusion, both the American National Security Strategy and the European Security Strategy perceive the same threats in the Middle East differently. Therefore, both strategies have dissimilar priorities towards the WMD, the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, terrorism, and rogue states.

¹⁵⁹ Alexander Skiba, "Transatlantic Relations and Rogue States: the Case of Adjusting U.S. Policy towards Iran," (Wissenschaft und Sicherheit, no.1, 21 January 2007), 5-6,
http://www.sicherheitspolitik.de/uploads/media/wus_01_2007_transatlantic_relations.pdf.

¹⁶⁰ Ortega, "The Achilles Heel of Transatlantic Relations," 156-158.

Conclusion:

Tracking down the history of transatlantic policies in the Middle East since the end of the World War II gives us an understanding that the Middle East was and still is a battleground for influence and competition between the United States and Europe. With the demise of the European powers and the birth of the American puissance after the World War II, the United States took over the lead in managing the Middle East whereas European powers pursued their policies in the Middle East under the American umbrella only as a complementary role. However, with the end of the Cold War and the emerging of the European Union as a strategic actor, Europe took a crack at having a say in the international arena, particularly in the Middle East. The September 11 events and the existence of a unilateral and assertive American administration led by George W. Bush for eight years, stressed transatlantic relations. With Barak Obama's sweeping triumph of and his plans to heal the rifts of the transatlantic relations and pull out from Iraq and negotiate Iran, an optimistic tone came to the forefront of the transatlantic relations.

The Middle East is at the hub of transatlantic relations. Comparison between the New American Security Strategy (NSS) 2002 and the European Security Strategy (ESS) 2003 verified that the transatlantic allies have the same common goals and similar interests in the Middle East; however they adopted different strategic thinking in threats perception, tools of action, and priorities. In other words, both the United States and Europe clinched the same sources of threat such as terrorism, proliferation of weapons of mass destruction, rogue and failed states, and in some way regional conflicts. In addition, both Europe and the United States shared the same interests in facing those threats in the Middle East such as solving the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, securing Israel, oil supplies as well as their economic interests. However, those same threats were perceived differently in each side of the Atlantic. The NSS referred that the very foundation of terrorism in the Middle East lies in despotic and authoritarian regimes. The ESS, on the other hand, argued that it stems also from the European continent and from the impasse of regional conflicts such the Palestinian-Israeli conflict. While the NSS perceived the proliferation of WMD as a component of its strategy against terrorism and associated it to the intentions of the rogue states, the ESS separately handled proliferation and linked it to the global control regimes and to the unsolved conflicts. While the NSS espoused the rogue state concept and linked it to

terrorism, the ESS embraced the failed state concept and linked it bad governance and corruption.

Anchored in their divergent threat perception, transatlantic priorities diverged over the Middle East issues. The Bush administration paid no attention to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict and concentrated instead on the democratization of Palestinian based on an insight that the Israeli-Palestinian conflict is a struggle between a democratic state (Israel) and Palestinian terrorist organizations. Conversely, the European Union paid more attention to solve the roots of conflict as a regional conflict that peace would not be accomplished without a Palestinian state. Therefore, the European Union has always been eager to have a more political leverage in the conflict. In addition, the Bush administration envisaged that Iraq was the combat zone against terrorism, whereas the European Union conceived that the American invasion to Iraq would breed more terrorism in the region as well as in the globe.

Furthermore, the Bush administration embraced the conviction that rogue states must be contained and isolated, whereas the European Union embraced the conviction that rogue states must be engaged with and be token to. Therefore, it was unsurprisingly that the transatlantic strategies diverged over the best tools of actions. Whereas the NSS adopted the use of the military force as a core of its policy, the ESS embraced a mixture of hard and soft power, with more emphasis on the European civilian power. Whereas the NSS espoused preemption that implied a military attacks for regimes change, the ESS adopted the preemptive engagement that implied crises management. Whereas the NSS adopted unilateralism as the driving force in foreign affairs, the ESS embraced the effective multilateralism. The NSS 2006 supported the guiding principles of the NSS 2002 albeit with a shift of attention from Iraq and Afghanistan to Iran, Syria, Hamas and Hezbollah and with a more attention to cooperation with the European allies.

Nevertheless, transatlantic policies in the Middle East converge even within their divergence. In other words, the transatlantic allies are inclined to adapt an operational framework as a formula to enable them to "work through differences."¹⁶¹ The Bush administration's first term can be portrayed as an unprecedented era of divergence between the transatlantic allies, whereas the Bush administration's second term can be described as era of pragmatic convergence combined with divergences over principles and ideologies. The Obama's revolution in 2008 can

¹⁶¹ Shapiro, "Birding the Transatlantic Counterterrorism Gap," 161.

be depicted as a clear-cut change in the American foreign policy and in the transatlantic policies towards the Middle East issues. The sources of convergence and divergence in the transatlantic policies towards the Middle East will be further explained by three case studies taking into consideration that the period of study combines two different American administrations. The next chapter will handle the Iraq crisis.

Chapter Three:

War of Choice or War of Necessity:

Transatlantic Policies and the Iraq Crisis: Postures and Reasons

“Learning the right lessons from [the American] experience in Iraq should convince [them] that preserving [their] power sometimes requires restraining it.” Freidman H. Benjamin

“In a world where black and white have become opaque, grey really is the color of [transatlantic relations].” Forsberg Tuomas & Graeme P. Herd

“Treat your friends like allies and they will behave like allies... most of [Europe] would prefer to be called an 'ally' or a 'partner' rather than a 'tool' in a box.” Javier Solana

▪ Introduction:

Transatlantic policies towards the Middle East region have always put up with convergences and divergences but never called into question the roots of these relations. The opinion that the American invasion of Iraq in March 2003 has ultimately questioned the reliability and the underpinnings of the transatlantic joint venture was widely spread. The base of the transatlantic community was rock-solid following the West's idyllic triumph over communism in 1991. Institutional collaboration reached its peak by the Transatlantic Declaration of 1990 and the New Atlantic Agenda in 1995 and twelve-monthly gatherings turned out to be a rule between Europe and the United States. The props of the transatlantic relations revolved around the fact that they both are in the same boat. They share the same values of freedom, democratic system, and predominance of laws and regulations, allocate indistinguishable concerns of spreading their economic and political values over the globe while at the same time, fighting the spread of Weapons of Mass Destruction, and advocate stability in the hot spots of the world such as the Middle East region. Transatlantic differences also stayed alive but were being managed and kept beneath the surface. However, by the election of George W. Bush and the September 11 attacks, transatlantic relations have been exposed somewhat hurly-burly affairs.¹

The Iraq crisis was at the heart of this transatlantic 'dissonance,' which was depicted as an unparalleled crisis because, its harshness and austerity not only manifested itself between Europe and the United States but also within Europe itself. Two different camps materialized, albeit with different labels ranging from "Atlantic Europe (UK, the Netherlands, Denmark and Portugal), New Europe (the new NATO and EU members), Core Europe (Germany and France), and Non-aligned Europe (Finland, Sweden, Austria and Ireland)."² However, the Iraq crisis was not a strictly downwards line but rather a curve with three phases. The first was the pre-war phase 2001-2002 that witnessed some tensions over various issues which ranged from international conventions such as Kyoto, and the International Criminal Court, to tensions over American unilateralism in its war against terrorism. The second was the war phase 2002-2003 when the United States decisively singled out Iraq as the next station in its global war against terrorism without a genuine consulting with its European allies. By that time, the gap started to

¹ Tuomas Forsberg and Graeme P. Herd, *Divided West: European Security and the Transatlantic Relationship* (London: Chatham House, 2006), 121.

² *Ibid.*, 2.

be wider until it reached its highest point with the Anglo- American invasion of Iraq on March 19, 2003. The third was the post-war phase 2003-2009 which no sooner the war was officially finished that it started. This phase, particularly in Bush's second term in 2004, witnessed pragmatic endeavors by the United States and Europe to heal their rifts for different reasons on each side. Accordingly, this chapter will draw attention to these three phases in order to give explanations of divergences and convergences between the transatlantic allies based on a multilateral theoretical approach that combines neo-realism, neo-liberalism, and constructivism.

▪ **Pre-War Phase 2001-2002: Evolving Transatlantic Tensions beneath Surface.**

With the 2000 election of President George W. Bush the United States embraced a neoconservative program towards the world in general and the Middle East in particular. This program was principally based on a desire to make a distinction between the Bush administration and his predecessor, and Iraq became the nucleus of the administrations' interests. The agenda of the neoconservatives gave emphasis to:

The re-invocation of strong nationalism and cultural unity in modern western societies; the value of a simple religious and philosophical morality;...the use of maximum force by the western democracies in the face of endemic threat; and of a more general 'peace through strength' approach to foreign policy by the US, the political and ideological leader of modern western civilization.³

Even before the September 11 attacks, there was a belief within this neo-conservative administration that the Iraq tyrant was the starting place to remap the Middle East according to American interests.⁴ This tendency explains the neo-cons's saying that the shortest way to "Jerusalem runs through Bagdad."⁵ In fact, the American tendency for unilateralism is deeply-rooted in the American society. In the aftermath of the downfall of the Soviet threat, neoconservative rationale started to take the pendulum towards an assertive unilateral policy. The seeds of this thought were firstly captured by Paul Wolfowitz, who later on turned out to be the Deputy Secretary of Defense in the Bush first administration, when he developed the "Pentagon's Defense Planning Guidance" in 1992. This plan outlined the American desire for an

³ Jim George, "Leo Strauss, Neo-conservatism and US Foreign Policy: Esoteric Nihilism and the Bush Doctrine," *International Politics* 42 (2005), 174, doi:10.1057/palgrave.ip.8800106.

⁴ The Bush administration's first term was replete with prominent figures from the neoconservative camp- including Deputy Secretary of Defense Paul Wolfowitz, Under Secretary of Defense Douglas Feith, and Undersecretary of State John Bolton who believed in the forceful promotion of democracy in other countries.

⁵ Kenneth M. Pollack, "The Seven Deadly Sins of Failure in Iraq: A Retrospective Analysis of the Reconstruction," *Middle East Review of International Affairs* 10, no. 4 (December 2006), 2, http://www.brookings.edu/articles/2006/12iraq_pollack.aspx.html.

assertive unipolar world led by the United States. The ideology of the neo-cons was eloquently addressed in the words of one commentator:

All potential competitors, regional or global, would be deterred from even aspiring to a larger role...Multilateral frameworks would be used where possible, but the United States, acting alone if necessary, would become the final arbiter of what did or did not constitute a threat to world order. Above all, the maintenance of unipolar hegemony would become America's principal foreign policy objectives.⁶

Later on, Iraq turned to be at the hub of the “Project for the New American Century,” twisted by the neoconservatives, in 1997, which called for the American primacy through its unprecedented military power. In 1998, the neoconservatives delivered an “open letter” urging the President to take a “unilateral action on Iraq as a means of imposing regime change and democratizing the Middle East.”⁷ In October 1998 the American Congress passed “the Iraq Liberation Act” that called for a regime change in Iraq.⁸

Tensions in transatlantic relations started to materialize with the Bush administration's yearning for an unrestrained and unbounded foreign policy of the United States. This desire emanated from a belief in the Bush administration that international convictions and institutions do nothing but hold back the United States' freedom of action to accomplish its national interests. In a sense, these international treaties and institutions are acceptable only when they serve the American interests. This desire to dump multilateralism was clearly articulated in the American administration's refusal of numerous international agreements such as “the Kyoto” accord, and “the Statue of the International Criminal Court”. The Bush administration even threw out “the ABM treaty and the protocol to the Biological Weapons Convention”. Those American acts were highly criticized by its European allies, even by its Atlantic ally, the United Kingdom. In few months the Bush administration rapidly established a solid reputation that it acts unilaterally without even consulting its closest European allies and this attitude antagonized most of the European states.⁹

⁶ David Clark, “European Foreign Policy and American Primacy,” *International Politics*, 45(2008), 278, <http://www.palgrave-journals.com/ip/journal/v45/n3/pdf/ip20084a.pdf>.

⁷ George, “Leo Strauss, Neo-conservatism,” 189-190.

⁸ Carol M. Glen, “Multilateralism in a Unipolar World: the UN Security Council and Iraq,” *International Relations of Asia Pacific* 6, no.2 (2006):312.

⁹ Jone J. Hamre, “America on the Edge of an Uncertain Future,” in: *From Alliance to Coalition: the Future of Transatlantic Relations*, 2nd ed. eds. Wener Weidenfeld et. al. (Gutersloh: Verlag Bertelsmann Stiftung, 2006), 131-132.

However, the September 11 resulted in two contradictory tendencies. The first was an instinctive European “solidarity” with the United States. This solidarity manifested itself in the unconditional pledge of German support and the French sympathy expressed in the famous *Le Monde* headline that stated that on this day “we are all Americans”. Europe declared joining the United States in its global war on terrorism, and for the first time in history NATO brought into play article 5 as a sign of transatlantic cohesion in countering international terrorism.¹⁰ The second tendency was a revolution in American foreign and security policy. The terrorist attacks showed the vulnerability of the American national security since it was the first time in history that a massive assault hit the heart of the American lands despite the puissance of the American power. This vulnerability coalesced with the possession of enormous military power convinced Bush's administration to use its military power against Iraq as outlined by Philip Gordon:

The combination of [the] two factors- a feeling of vulnerability and a feeling of power-... [created] an unwavering determination to make the homeland safe, first by using U.S. military power to eliminate threats such as Saddam Hussein and then by spreading freedom and democracy around the world.¹¹

This sense of vulnerability became obvious in public opinion polls that found that two out of each three Americans were afraid of becoming targets of future terrorist attacks. An all-inclusive review of American national security was conducted for both home land security and foreign security. As for American foreign policy the goal of fighting global terrorism has given the United States a card blanche to do whatever it wants without consulting others under the banner of Bush doctrine, enacted following the American war in Afghanistan and before the American invasion to Iraq. These changes included preemption, military primacy, unilateralism, and regime change principles which were all officially stipulated in the New American National Security Strategy of 17 September 2002.¹² Hence, the September 11 attacks motivated a latent tendency in the American administration to resort to the ultimate military power in order to accomplish its national interests whether by the help of its allies or by itself regardless of the allies’ position. Gunter Burghardt summarized the Bush administration's policies following September 11 by stating that:

¹⁰ Adrian Hyde-Price, “‘Continental Drift’: Transatlantic Relations and American Unipolarity” (paper presented at the 31st Annual BISA Conference, University of College Cork, 18-20th December 2006.), 15.

¹¹ Philip H.Gordon, “The End of the Bush Revolution,” *Foreign Affairs* 85, no. 4(2006):78.

¹² Robert J. Lieber, *the American Era: Power and Strategy for the 21st Century* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2007), 42-47.

9-11 had the effect of amplifying a policy...eager[s] to coin the 'Bush doctrine': the ideology of the neoconservatives...; the reliance on the military superiority of the world's sole...power with a defense budget bigger than that all other [European] countries' defense budgets combined,...an oversimplified...distinction between right and wrong, good and evil; and a refusal to let 'others' have a say in determining America's...action[s].¹³

This statement exemplified the flagrant ideological, militant, and unilateral nature of the Bush administration's policies, particularly with respect of the Middle East region, which started by invading Afghanistan in 2001 and pursued by conquering Iraq in 2003. The first target of the American campaign against terrorism was Afghanistan to topple the Taliban government that harbored Al Qaeda's organization, the perpetrator of the September 11 attacks. The American intervention in Afghanistan was authorized by the UN Security Council, and was widely supported by the international community, particularly by its European allies and NATO.¹⁴ Despite the European support for the Operation Enduring Freedom, the United States preferred to work unilaterally as it rebuffed NATO's declaration of Article 5 and favored suitable traditional allies for the mission.¹⁵

Because it considered their case legitimate, the United States turned down numerous proposals for military assistance before the war, while just about twenty countries were endorsed by the United States to become part of the coalition. Britain had the lion share in the operation, where Germany, France, Denmark, Australia, and many other nations markedly participated as well. However, the majority of the nations that demonstrated a complete support of the United States in the war in Afghanistan anticipated that this war is the last part of the military campaign against terrorism and the rest of the endeavor would be directed to "law enforcement activities". The American administration's rhetoric and acts after the Afghanistan war proved the fallacy of this assumption because it overtly announced that this was just the first step in a long- lasting war against terrorism. The second station would be in Iraq.¹⁶ Thus, Iraq became a thorny issue for the transatlantic allies and the divide started to get wider and deeper.

¹³ Gunter Burghardt, "The European Union's Transatlantic Relations" (EU Diplomacy paper, College of Europe, Department of EU International Relations and Diplomacy Studies, 2-2006), 16.

¹⁴ Luis Miguel, "Iraq and Afghanistan: A Comparison Based on International Law," (Real Instituto Elcano, Area: Security & Defence, ARI10/2008, Translated from Spanish, 8-2-2008), 1.

¹⁵ Kirsten R. Fraser, "Evaluating the Transatlantic Relationship" (A Senior Honors Thesis presented in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for graduation with distinction in Political Science in the undergraduate colleges of the Ohio State University, the Ohio State University, December 2006), 10-11.

¹⁶ Ivo H. Daalder and James M. Lindsay, *America Unbound: the Bush Revolution in Foreign Policy*. 2nd ed. (New Jersey and Canada: John Wiley and Sons, Inc., Hoboken, 2005), 114-115.

▪ War-Phase 2002-2003: A Striking Divide - 'War of Choice or War of Necessity'

In January 2002, Iraq was officially declared as the next probable station in the American global war on terrorism. Iraq was incorporated in the “axis of evil” metaphor, together with Iran and North Korea, in Bush's 2002 State of the Union speech.¹⁷ For the American administration, ousting Saddam Hussein turned out to be the decisive approach for handling Middle East troubles.¹⁸ The United States perceived that changing the Iraq regime, which supports the hard liners in Palestine, would help to solve the Palestinian- Israeli conflict.¹⁹ In May 2002, 'preemption,' which later became known as the 'Bush doctrine,' was sketched out as an American foreign policy. The doctrine's essence revolved around the idea that the United States would exercise all its military might before a threat even becomes a reality as a way to counter terrorism, the spread of WMD, and the rogue states. Later on, this doctrine became the trademark of the New American National Security Strategy, released on September 17, 2002 and was first applied in Iraq.²⁰ The Bush administration gave progressively more attention to Iraq as the ultimate security threat to the world and to the United States' national security. It marketed this imminent threat by situating Iraq in the center of the triangle of terrorism, WMD, and rogue states. The United States claimed that the Iraq regime led by Saddam Hussein seizes and “develop[s] WMD”. In addition, it alleged that the Iraq regime has close connections with 'Al-Qaida' which indicated that the most devastating scenario could take place if Saddam Hussein provided these terrorist groups with WMD. Moreover, the United States accused the Iraqi regime of undermining any international endeavor to work out a solution to “the Israeli-Palestinian conflict.”²¹

European reactions to President Bush's State of Union Speech were not united. There was neither collective European stance nor a common foreign and security policy, instead national European attributions came to the forefront. With the exception of Germany and Britain, most of the EU member states stayed away from stating a plain position about the Iraq issue. However,

¹⁷ Bernhard Stahl, “Understanding the 'Great Split' in Iraq Crisis: A Comparative Approach of the Member States Foreign Policy” (paper prepared for Presentation at the UACES Conference in Zagreb, 4-7 September.2005), 10.

¹⁸ Marie Curie, “The Influence of the War in Iraq on Transatlantic Relations,” (SEI Working paper no.79, Sussex European Institute, 2002-2003), 15, <http://www.sussex.ac.uk/sei/documents/wp79.pdf>.

¹⁹ Costanza Musa and William Wallace, “The Middle East: Focus of Discord,” in: *Europe, America, Bush: Transatlantic relations in the Twenty-First Century*, eds. John Peterson and Mark A. Pollack (London and New York: Routledge Taylor and Francis Group, 2003), 112.

²⁰ Hamre, “America on the Edge of an Uncertain Future,” 133.

²¹ Bernhard Stahl, “Incoherent Securitization: the EU in the Iraq Crisis,” *Hamburg Review of Social Science* 1.3, no.1, (2008): 78.

the response to the Bush speech was depressing because most European states thought that the 'axis' notion was not realistic and expressed deep concerns about the American plans to change the Iraqi regime forcefully.²² The American plan to invade Iraq formed two camps across Europe, and each walked off in the opposite direction: an 'Atlantic camp' composed of the UK as the ultimate symbol of Atlantic partnership due to its well-known special relationship with the United States, Spain, Portugal, Italy, Denmark, the Netherlands, and most of 'New Europe' versus an 'Europeanist camp' composed mainly of 'Core Europe' Germany, France, and some 'non-aligned European states' with the support of Russia.²³

The major divergences were between the Franco-German axis and the Anglo-American alliance whereas the other countries in Europe aligned themselves either with the French-German refusal of the war or with the Anglo-American determination to go to war. These divisions between Europe and the United States and among European states regarding Iraq are to be examined in detail, particularly concerning the big member states, in order to draw attention to the reasons behind them. The first move to express the resentment against the United States' plans in Iraq came from Germany, where, in February 2002, the former German Minister of Foreign Affairs, Joschka Fischer, highly suspected any potential correlation between the Iraq regime and 'AL-Qaida'.²⁴ There was a European sense that the United States would not take into consideration its European partners' opinions. This sense was explicitly announced by Fischer when he asked the American administration not to treat its "European allies" as "satellite states". In May 2002, President Bush went to Germany, explained his position towards Iraq, and promised to discuss with its European allies any steps the United States would take against Iraq. An implied compromise was struck between Bush and the German Chancellor Schroder: "Bush would not start preparations for war before the German elections, and Schroder would not ride on the anti-war issue during his election campaign."²⁵

Nevertheless, this compromise did not hold when actual American preparations of military action against Iraq were exposed in June 2002. At this point Schroder, faced with deteriorating opinion polls, decided to launch the final stage of his re-election campaign with the

²² Ibid., 79.

²³ Erdal Onat, "Tension and Cooperation in Transatlantic Relations with Regard to Iraq" (A Thesis Submitted to the Gradual School of Social Sciences of Middle East Technical University, June 2005), 32.

²⁴ Stahl, "Understanding the 'Great Split' in Iraq Crisis," 10.

²⁵ Tuomas Forsberg, "German Foreign Policy and the War on Iraq: Anti-Americanism, Pacifism, or Emancipation," *Security Dialogue* 32, no.2 (2005): 218.

Iraq matter as the last card to win elections. Schroder decisively argued that Germany “would not participate in any adventures” and considered the war on Iraq a deviation from “WMD disarmament to regime change.”²⁶ The American-German divergence was even exacerbated when the German Justice Minister Hertha Daubler-Gmelin compared Bush's policy and Hitler's. “German-US relations were poisoned,” the White House proclaimed, and personal relations between Bush and Schroder all but froze.²⁷ Following the success of Schroder in September 2002, the German government started to alleviate the divide with the United States, without modifying its constant refusal to an American military intervention in Iraq. This explains that Germany received the American resort to the 'UN Security Council' in September 2002 to enact a mandate with a salutation. Nevertheless, Germany held a reservation on any mandate that gives the United States an automatic right to strike Iraq if the Iraq government does not abide by the resolution. Furthermore, Germany assured again on 27 September that it would not take part in any coercive actions against Iraq, even under the Security Council's umbrella.²⁸

The first move to articulate support for the Bush administration's intentions in Iraq came from the United Kingdom, where the British Prime Minister Tony Blair, in April 2002, approved the American plans of war against Iraq. Nevertheless, Blair announced that war could still be avoided and that certain legality is a prerequisite. This explains the fact that the American administration, under the British request and upon the insistence of Secretary of State Powell, resorted to the United Nations Security Council in September 2002, simultaneously with the military preparations on the ground to invade Iraq.²⁹ Britain managed to direct American foreign policy towards the Security Council and the famous resolution 1441 was enacted. The resolution required Iraq to agree to strict inspection procedures or bear “serious consequences.”³⁰ On 23 September 2002, the Blair government attempted to turn around British public opinion, which was against the war, by providing reports about “Iraq's Weapons of Mass Destruction” and later on about the regime's atrocities against “human rights”. In January 2003, Britain declared its ultimate “support to the Bush administration” in the war against Iraq.³¹

²⁶ Sebastian Harnisch, “German Non-Proliferation Policy and the Iraq Conflict,” *German Politics* 13, no.1 (2004):10-11.

²⁷ Forsberg, “German Foreign Policy,” 219.

²⁸ Harnisch, “German Non-Proliferation Policy,” 12.

²⁹ Stahl, “Understanding the 'Great Split' in Iraq Crisis,” 10.

³⁰ Miguel, “Iraq and Afghanistan: A Comparison,” 5.

³¹ Stahl, “Incoherent Securitization: the Iraq Crisis,” 82-83.

Unlike Germany, France remained reluctant to take a stand from January 2002 until early 2003 in the hope that the Security Council resolution 1441 would guarantee the non-use of force without a new resolution.³² Paris even affirmed that it would play a part in a military strike if Iraq did not comply with the international resolution. France even supported the United States' endeavor to have a strict mandate (1441) that allowed for a severe inspection of Weapons of Mass Destruction in Iraq. Only when the United States unilaterally interpreted the 1441 resolution as a legal basis to launch a war and when the United States "re-drafted Security Council resolution 1441," a clear-cut opposition was taken by France against the war on Iraq. On 20 January a formal opposition was deployed by the French Minister of Foreign affairs, De Villepin that "France would oppose any SCR leading to war."³³

Accordingly, the key confrontation between Paris and Washington over Iraq started in February and March 2003 when the United States proposed another mandate to the Security Council to give the Anglo-American alliance the legality to launch the war.³⁴ During his visit to the United Nations in September 2002, the French president explained the French stance on Iraq with two yeses and two No's: a French yes for further inclusive inspections in Iraq, and another yes for making a distinction between "regime change and weapons control;" a French no for a unilateral military strike against Iraq, and a French no for "an automatic" connection between "Iraq's failure to disclose arms and military attack."³⁵ At this point, France and Germany were completely united against the war, and Germany took a further step by rejecting the war even if another Security Council mandate was passed.³⁶ This conformity in positions between Germany and France was officially announced and Russian support reinforced this camp:

On the occasion of the 40th anniversary of the Elysee friendship treaty, President Chirac and Chancellor Schroder stated that they have the same judgment of the crisis. In a joint declaration with Russia (10-2-2003) the two countries objected again to going to war and pleaded for more weapons inspections instead.³⁷

³² Stephen Wood, "The Iraq War: Five European Roles" (paper presented at the National Europe Center, No.112, 13 June 2003), 6.

³³ Stahl, "Understanding the 'Great Split' in Iraq Crisis," 13.

³⁴ Paul Gallis, "France: Factors Shaping Foreign Policy, and Issues in U.S.-French Relations" (CRS Report for Congress, Updated May 19, 2006), 22.

³⁵ David Styan, "Jacques Chirac's 'non': France, Iraq and the United Nations, 1991-2003," *Modern and Contemporary France* 12, no. 3 (2004): 379-380.

³⁶ Greg Caplan, "Transatlantic Relations and the Middle East: Partnership or Rivalry?" (Transatlantic Institute, the American Jewish Committee, May 2004), 6, <http://www.transatlanticinstitute.org/medias/publications/181.pdf>.

³⁷ Stahl, "Incoherent Securitization: the Iraq Crisis," 82.

The other European states turned around the two camps associated themselves with one of them. Spain, Portugal, the Netherlands, Italy, and the 'New Europe' (the ten new European member states), known as the Atlantic camp, aligned themselves with the Anglo-American stance. Spain under the government of the Prime Minister Jose Maria Aznar did not reveal its ultimate support to the United States until September 2002. Even though public opposition to the war was as high as 90% in the polls, the Aznar government all of a sudden chose the Atlantic camp.³⁸ In addition, the Spanish leader declared that international institutions, such as the UN, must not stand against a "necessary military intervention". Furthermore, Aznar led the initiative of publishing a surprising statement of collective support for the United States, which later became known as the "letter of eight." Spain even played a part when both Britain and the United States outlined another mandate, on 24 February 2003, which gave a blessing to a military assault against Iraq.³⁹

Italy, under Silvio Berlusconi's coalition government, was similar in its position to Spain. Italy declared its position in September 2002, and expressed its wish for victory over the tyrant Iraqi leader.⁴⁰ Even though the Italian public opinion did not support a military strike against Iraq, Berlusconi consented to the American plans when he "signed a letter" that rhetorically reinforce the American side.⁴¹ In addition, Berlusconi managed to pass a legislative act that allowed the United States to use "Italy's military bases and airspace for the attack on Iraq."⁴² Poland as a key ally to the United States expressed its ultimate support, derived from an aspiration to be both rewarded by the American administration as well as to defy the Franco-German hegemony over the European continent.⁴³ In a shock to France and Germany, in January 2003, all these positions were collectively formulated in a memo of support to the United States by eight states. These states, the UK, Spain, Italy, Portugal, Denmark, Poland, the Czech Republic, and Hungary were called the "gang of eight" by France.⁴⁴ A week later, another

³⁸ Joaquin Roy, "Spain's Return to 'Old Europe': Background and Consequences of the March 11 and 14, 2004 Terrorist Attack and Elections" (paper presented at the International Studies Association Annual Meeting Held in Honolulu, Hawaii, March 1-5, 2005), 4-7.

³⁹ Stahl, "Incoherent Securitization: the Iraq Crisis," 84.

⁴⁰ Ibid., 84.

⁴¹ Virginie Collombier, "The Middle East: Ground for Italy to Play with the Big Guys," 3, <http://foreignpolicy.it/adon/files/collombier.rtf>.

⁴² Raffaella A. Del Sarto A. and Nathalie Tocci, "Italy's Politics Without Policy: Balancing Atlanticism and Europeanism in the Middle East," *Modern Italy* 13, no. 2 (May 2008):138.

⁴³ Wood, "The Iraq War: Five European Roles"12.

⁴⁴ Onat, "Tension and Cooperation in Transatlantic Relations," 33.

declaration of support to the United States was formulated by the new member states of the EU known as the “Vilnius 10”. In this declaration 13 post-Communist states and five EU-NATO members announced their evident support to the American plans in Iraq.⁴⁵ These declarations, the “letter of eight” and the “Vilnius 10,” irritated France and pushed the French President Chirac to severely criticize the newcomers in the EU and hint that this might have an effect on their chances to join the EU.⁴⁶ These declarations gave the American administration the opportunity to submit an application to the golden principle in politics known as divide and rule. Secretary of Defense Donald Rumsfeld took this occasion to create his famous distinction between “old Europe” and “new Europe” as a way to differentiate between those who were willing to assist the United States and those who were not and he even argued that the political weight of Europe was shifting towards the East.⁴⁷

Thus, the political scene was prepared for the edge of the split: the American and British military preparations for the invasion were accelerated, an American-British-Spanish proposal asked the Security Council to authorize a military attack, and the United States requested from NATO to provide Turkey with military assistance. On the other side of the fence, there was a Franco-German persistence that the inspection efforts were not yet finished, that war was the last resort and other tools were not exhausted, and that war was not inevitable. In a response to the American-British-Spanish draft mandate to the Security Council, France, Germany and Russia on 24 February requested four months of inspections for WMD in Iraq before resorting to force.⁴⁸ NATO and the UN Security Council became the battlefields for the two camps. In NATO, Germany, France and Belgium turned down an American demand for “contingency planning for assistance to Turkey” in order not to give the impression that war was inevitable.⁴⁹ In the UN Security Council, where the United States, Britain and Spain exerted great efforts to secure at least the majority of the members, France and Germany exerted counterbalancing efforts to persuade the non-permanent states to vote against the mandate and intensive deliberations were accelerated, until France decisively declared that it would use its own right as

⁴⁵ Forsberg, *Divided West*, 68.

⁴⁶ Stahl, “Understanding the ‘Great Split in Iraq Crisis,’” 13.

⁴⁷ Forsberg, *Divided West*, 68.

⁴⁸ Onat, “Tension and Cooperation in Transatlantic Relations,” 36.

⁴⁹ Forsberg, *Divided West*, 57.

a permanent member in the Security Council to obstruct any mandate that authorizes the use of force against Iraq.⁵⁰

Faced not only by the possibility of a French and a Russian rebuff, but also by the likelihood of not securing the nine votes required for a “moral” majority in the Security Council, the United States and its allies opted for a unilateral action without the consent of the United Nations Security Council. On March 17, 2003, the diplomatic match ended, the Atlantic camp dumped the draft proposal and the United States decided to conquer Iraq two days later without a UN mandate.⁵¹

Even though the Atlantic camp rhetorically supported the United States, the bulk of the military contributions for the Operation Iraqi Freedom came from the United States. Britain was the chief military supporter to the United States since it pledged and rallied “30.000 troops” which were vigorously involved in the operation and invaded the South of Iraq.⁵² Spain, Italy, and the Netherlands abstained from dynamic “participation in the war.” Spain deployed “three ships and 900 troops for medical support and anti-mine capabilities,” and Italy opened its military bases and air space to the United States. However, after the invasion Italy decided to participate in the “occupation forces with 3000 troops.”⁵³ Surprisingly, both Germany and Greece did the same and allowed the United States to use their military bases even if both states refused to participate in the war. Denmark and Poland were vigorously involved in the operation, albeit in small numbers. Denmark provided “510 troops to the occupation forces,” and Poland took a bigger role when it became an occupying force. Therefore, despite the rhetorical support the United States had from many European states, their actual military contributions were rather small.⁵⁴

In a quick triumph, the coalition forces toppled the Iraq regime within less than a month. On board the USS Abraham Lincoln, an aircraft carrier stationed off the coast of San Diego, Bush declared on May 1, 2003 that the war was over and the “mission accomplished.”⁵⁵ For Europeans this war was not a war of necessity but a war of choice, not only to topple the Iraq regime, set free a subjugated Arabic people or remap the Middle East region, but also to

⁵⁰ Glen, “Multilateralism in a Unipolar World,” 315-316.

⁵¹ Daalder, *America Unbound: the Bush Revolution*, 141.

⁵² Stahl, “Understanding the 'Great Split' in Iraq Crisis,” 14.

⁵³ —, “Incoherent Securitization: the Iraq Crisis,” 90-92.

⁵⁴ —, “Understanding the 'Great Split' in Iraq Crisis,” 15-16.

⁵⁵ Daalder, *America Unbound: the Bush Revolution*, 161.

construct a new world order according to the American terms and Iraq was the test case.⁵⁶ Furthermore, the American declaration that the military operations were finished marked just the start of the genuine war in Iraq. In his words Kenneth M. Pollack expressed the fact that the end of the big military operations in Iraq was just the beginning of the real war:

The invasion itself was, overall, a remarkably successful operation, resulting in the capture of Bagdad and the fall of the regime in...less than four weeks. Yet the invasion was not the war. It was merely the beginning of the war.⁵⁷

A new phase of the war had just started; the phase of insurgency, reconstruction, rebuilding a new Iraq state, and filling the political, military and security gaps caused by the removal of Iraqi regime.

▪ **Post-War Phase 2003-2009: Pragmatic Convergences, Divergences in Principle**

Condoleezza Rice, National Security Advisor in Bush's first term and Secretary of State in the second, recommended to penalize France, to close the eyes to Germany and not to blame Russia as strategy to address their opposition to the military invasion in Iraq.⁵⁸ Yet, the situation in Iraq after the war rapidly exacerbated in a way that pushed the American administration to request international support from both the United Nations and its European allies. Directly following the war, a number of European declarations supported healing the rifts in transatlantic relations.⁵⁹ In the words of Fischer the “transatlantic relationship is the crucial corner stone of global security and that calling this corner stone into question would be worse than folly.” French Foreign Minister De Villepin argued, seven days after the start of the war, that both France and the US “share common values” and that “they will reestablish cooperation in complete solidarity.”⁶⁰

After the US invaded Iraq Germany did not “congratulate the victory,” but it welcomed the “defeat” of the Iraq regime. The German language of disapproval gradually vanished and the country declared its eagerness to take part in the reconstruction process, pushed for a bigger

⁵⁶ Constanze Stelzenmuller, “Transatlantic Power Failures: America and Europe, Seven Years After 9-11: Hard Power Humbled, Soft Power Exposed, and Looser, More Pragmatic Relationship” (GMF paper Series, Brussels Forum paper Series, the German Marshall Fund of the United States, March 2008), 7.

⁵⁷ Pollack, “The Seven Deadly Sins in Iraq,” 4.

⁵⁸ Emily Meyer, “Estranged: Transatlantic Relations in the 21ST Century” (The Florida State University D-Scholarship Repository, Article 89, 2005), 1.

⁵⁹ Ingo Peters, “Cooperation, Conflict and Crisis: the Impact of the Iraq War on European-American Relations” (paper presented at the International Studies Association (ISA) Annual Conference, San Francisco, 26-29 March 2008), 20.

⁶⁰ Robert J. Lieber, *the American Era: Power and Strategy for the 21st Century* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2007), 90.

responsibility of the United Nations in Iraq and a “clear timetable for restoring Iraq sovereignty” and even reinforced the American-British proposal to “lift sanctions against Iraq in the UN Security Council.” On a personal level, Bush and Schroder convened in September 2003 and announced that they had wiped out their differences.⁶¹ At this summit, Germany declared its willingness to be “part of the game in Iraq” and announced its readiness to provide assistance to the “Iraqi security officials,” and Bush declared that differences regarding Iraq were over.⁶²

France took similar positions of reconsolidation, assuring the critical role of the United Nations in the reconstruction process and the necessity of determining a schedule for handing over sovereignty to the Iraq people, and of establishing a “UN administration of Iraq.” France even negatively assessed the “political arrangements” by the United States in Iraq, particularly the reconstruction schemes and the monopoly of the American companies to the economic contracts in Iraq.⁶³ In June 2004, Bush paid a visit to France, met President Chirac and declared that the “common values and democracy” of the transatlantic alliance were at the core of the summit. This visit was explained with the yearning of the Bush administration to acquire a fig leaf of legitimacy for the transition period in Iraq, particularly legitimizing the surrender of authority to a “newly Iraqi government.” The French response was positive, since it stopped preaching a “multipolar world” and decreased the leverage on an autonomous “European Union Strategic planning capability” away from NATO.⁶⁴ France pledged to provide assistance to Iraq in the process of drafting a new Iraqi constitution. Furthermore, despite the American pronouncement to disregard companies from opposing states, particularly France and Germany, in the reconstruction process, all sides agreed to wipe out the Iraqi debt. All these signs were remarkable in the path to heal the rifts among the transatlantic allies, but some divergences remained.⁶⁵

In spite of these gestures of reconciliation, there was still a transatlantic divergence over how to reconstruct Iraq, particularly over the role of the United Nations in the post-war phase and over the military contributions of the European Union and NATO to Iraqi reconstruction. From the outset of the invasion, the United States was reluctant to give any considerable role to

⁶¹ Forsberg, “German Foreign Policy,” 220.

⁶² Onat, “Tension and Cooperation in Transatlantic Relations,” 79.

⁶³ Jonathan Spyer, “Europe and Iraq: Test Case for the Common Foreign and Security Policy,” *Middle East Review of International Affairs* 11, no. 2(July 2007), <http://meria.idc.ac.il/journal/2007/issue2/jv11no2a7.html>.

⁶⁴ Onat, “Tension and Cooperation in Transatlantic Relations,” 77-78.

⁶⁵ Ibid., 80.

the United Nations and confined their task to give “humanitarian assistance” and organize “international aid donations.” Most European states, including the UK, opted for a decisive responsibility of the United Nations in rebuilding Iraq.⁶⁶ The United States went further and demanded to head the reconstruction process which resulted in the reluctance of the international community to support this process.⁶⁷ At the Madrid conference for rebuilding and donating to Iraq in October 2003, the EU and its member states pledged to pay “\$ 1.25 billion for rebuilding Iraq and \$ 235 million for the year 2004” from the EU community budget.⁶⁸ Yet, the United States, faced by the deteriorating security situation in Iraq and the fact that it bore nearly most of the security burdens and reconstruction process in Iraq as a consequence of the reluctance of the major European powers, particularly Germany and France, decided to give a larger role to the United Nations in forming a new Iraqi government. This became explicitly evident in the international resolutions regarding Iraq following the war.⁶⁹

European states converged with the United States regarding the international mandates that legalized the military occupation and the political transition in Iraq. On 22 May 2003, the mandate 1483 (2003) recognized the coalition forces as occupation forces, which meant giving the Americans the required legitimacy, and called for the formation of an Iraq interim administration.⁷⁰ On October 16, 2003, a unanimous mandate 1511(2003) stipulated urging the other states to participate in the coalition forces and in the reconstruction, and called for the Interim Governing Council to set a “timetable and a program for drafting a new constitution for Iraq and for holding of democratic elections under that constitution.” On June 8, 2004, a unanimous mandate 1546 (2004) accepted and legitimized the “interim and transitional constitutional arrangements introduced in the Transitional Administrative Law” and gave the United Nations a crucial part in reinforcing Iraqi political move. Thus, a transatlantic convergence took place in the Security Council despite the European reservations about the limited role of the United Nations in Iraq.⁷¹

⁶⁶ Kristin Archich, “European Views and Policies toward the Middle East” (CRS Report for Congress, Updated December 21, 2005), 7.

⁶⁷ Pollack, “The Seven Deadly Sins in Iraq,” 5-6.

⁶⁸ Archich, “European Views and Policies towards the Middle East,” 9.

⁶⁹ Peters, “Cooperation, Conflict and Crisis: the Iraq War,” 22.

⁷⁰ Steven Wheatley, “The Security Council, Democratic legitimacy and Regime Change in Iraq,” *The European Journal of International Law* 17, no. 3(2006):534.

⁷¹ *Ibid.*, 535-536.

Nonetheless, regarding military contributions both France and Germany refused to send troops to Iraq and refused to extend NATO's role in Iraq at the June 2004 NATO summit in Istanbul. Instead, European states pledged to give training assistance to the Iraqi security forces.⁷² Despite the fact that the United States was backed by 16 out of 26 NATO member states, the military contributions of these states in Iraq were very limited and insignificant.⁷³ In 2005, the United States troops were the only "real" troops in Iraq; British troops, the largest contingent after the US troops, constituted less than 4% of all troops, whereas the other troops were not worth mentioning and were even paid for by the United States to stay in Iraq:

In March 2005 the 150,000 American troops in Iraq constituted nearly 90 percent of all the foreign forces supporting the Iraq operation- at an annual cost...\$ 80 billion. Britain was the only other country with at least 5,000 troops in Iraq. The remaining foreign contributions were largely insignificant. In some cases, the countries contributed troops only after Washington agreed to help pay for them.⁷⁴

In fact, the American quandary in Iraq was multifaceted. The first facet were the security upheavals in Iraq and rising the casualties that resulted mainly from the political mismanagement of the American administration of Iraq which created a political, security and military vacuum. This chaos was exacerbated by the American decision to dismantle the Iraq army and all the state's apparatus, the rising insurgency from militant groups in Iraq, and the misconduct of the political transitions which resulted in a semi-civil war in Iraq between two sectarian groups.⁷⁵ The second facet was the declining support from the allies in the coalition force who announced they would pull out their troops due to domestic public pressures or changes in their governments. The change of governments in Spain and Italy led to a rapid pull out of these countries' troops in Iraq.⁷⁶ Hungary, the Netherlands, Bulgaria, and Poland withdrew their troops from Iraq under the stress of economic costs and the public pressure. Even the United Kingdom considered a reduction in its troops, before Gordon Brown decided a complete withdrawal by the end of 2008.⁷⁷ Hence, by 2005 a rupture between the United States and its allies in the "coalition of the willing" was marked and even Poland, considered by many the

⁷² Archich, "European Views and Policies towards the Middle East," 8.

⁷³ Graeme P. Herd and Thomas Forsberg, "Constructive Transatlantic Strategic Dissonance: Making A Virtue Out of A Vice," *International Politics* 45, no. 3(2008):364.

⁷⁴ Daalder, *America Unbound: the Bush Revolution*, 193.

⁷⁵ Faleh A. Jabar, "Iraq Four Years after the U.S. - Led Invasion: Assessing the Crisis and Searching for A Way Forward" (Policy Outlook, CARNEGIE Endowment for International Peace, July 2007), 2-3.

⁷⁶ Spyer, "Europe and Iraq: Test Case," 103.

⁷⁷ Archich, "European Views and Policies towards the Middle East," 8-9.

closest ally of the United States, was “fed up” in Iraq. This was expressed by the words of Bronislaw Komorowski, the Deputy Chair of Poland's new governing party Civic Platform: “Poland has already fulfilled its obligations to America in Iraq 400%. I do not believe it serves Polish-American partnership to raise it to 500%.”⁷⁸

The third facet was the deteriorating image of the United States around the globe when it was discovered that there were no WMD in Iraq. The core pretext that the American administration relied on for the Iraq invasion was to find WMD. When David Kay, the leader of the inspection team for six months in 2003, declared that “we were all wrong, probably,” he meant that he found no Weapons of Mass Destruction in Iraq. His successor, Charles Duelfer, also announced in September of 2004 that Iraq did not have any programs for nuclear or chemical weapons.⁷⁹ The credibility of the United States was further undermined by the discovery of the human rights abuses in Abu Ghareeb prison.⁸⁰

On the other side of the fence, Europe had a decisive test for its own common foreign and security policy in Iraq. The result was turmoil and division among European states, the emergence of dichotomies of old and new Europe, and a burly return to the national European attitudes. This explained the tendency of the Franco-German axis to resuscitate the European Security and Defense Policy (ESDP) in April 2003 and its attempt to develop an autonomous defense identity in order to have a “strong and independent European voice on international stage.” However, this did not mean a European desire to leave the Atlantic alliance but rather an attempt to have a say for Europe in the Atlantic alliance.⁸¹ In an effort to unite Europe after the division over Iraq, the European states adopted the European Security Strategy (ESS) on 12 December 2003 as a way to unify their security perspectives.⁸² In this sense, the ESS was a direct effort to heal the European divisions over Iraq and to consolidate the transatlantic partnership. The ESS served various purposes, but first and foremost it was meant to reunify the European Union's Common Foreign and Security Policy (CFSP) after the EU split over Iraq; secondly it was supposed to provide a new basis for transatlantic security cooperation as well as to digest the

⁷⁸ Herd, “Constructive Transatlantic Strategic Dissonance,” 371.

⁷⁹ Daalder, *America Unbound: the Bush Revolution*, 150-152.

⁸⁰ Ibid., 191.

⁸¹ Caplan, “Transatlantic Relations and the Middle East,” 8.

⁸² Seven Biscop, *the European Security Strategy: A Global Agenda for Positive Power* (England: Ashgate Publishing Limited, 2005), 15.

Eastern enlargement of the EU.⁸³ Europe exerted a great effort to go forward with the Eastern enlargement in May 2004. However, the European integration process was hindered by the French and Dutch opposition to the new European constitution that was proposed to address the hurdles of the enlargement. The enlargement even complicated the decision making process within the Union and limited the capability of its member states to reach a common ground in foreign policy affairs.⁸⁴

Despite all these American and European difficulties and divergences on both sides of the Atlantic, more pragmatic and convergent transatlantic language and policies came to the surface in the second term of the Bush Administration. The new Secretary of State, Condoleezza Rice, affirmed the new administration's inclination to soften its rhetoric and repair the fissures in transatlantic relations by declaring that this was the “time for diplomacy.” In February 2005, Rice attempted to set the European scene for Bush's visit to Europe.⁸⁵ In her visit to Paris, Rice expressed an American desire for a “new chapter” in transatlantic relations. The French Foreign Minister Michael Barnier replied positively with a French aspiration for a “new stage” in transatlantic relations; France uttered its “pleasure” about the Iraq elections and showed support for the political process in Bagdad. Ironically, Donald Rumsfeld, who had created the dichotomy of old and new Europe, softened his tone at the annual Munich Conference on Security Policy, held on February 12, 2005 when he urged to wipe out the transatlantic differences and face the common threats of “WMD and terrorism.” When asked about the dichotomy he had created, Rumsfeld answered “that was old Rumsfeld.”⁸⁶ When Bush paid his first visit to Europe, after being reelected in February 2005, particularly to the states which refused the war in Iraq, many analysts contended that he acknowledged the deficiencies of his first term performance and the failure of his strategic revolutionary foreign policy in Iraq and all over the globe. Ivo H. Daalder described the lesson that Bush learned in his first term in his own words:

The lesson was clear. Far from demonstrating the triumph of unilateral American power, Bush's wars demonstrated the impotence of basing American foreign policy on a blend of power and cooperation.⁸⁷

⁸³ Peters, “Cooperation, Conflict and Crisis: the Iraq War,” 19.

⁸⁴ Robin Niblett, “Choosing between America and Europe: A new Context for the British Foreign Policy,” *International Affairs* 84, no. 4 (2007): 631.

⁸⁵ Philip H. Gordon, “The End of the Bush Revolution,” *Foreign Affairs* 85, no.4 (2006): 81.

⁸⁶ Onat, “Tension and Cooperation in Transatlantic Relations,” 81-82.

⁸⁷ Daalder, *America Unbound: the Bush Revolution*, 194.

A comparison was made between Bush's tour to Europe in 2001 (Poland, Spain, the United Kingdom, and Italy), a mark of his administration's tendency to ignore those states that criticized the United States, and his trip in 2005 (headquarters of NATO, Brussels, France, and Germany) as a sign of rapprochement with the states that had opposed the Iraq war. Rice appropriated more than two-thirds of her time abroad in 2005 to Europe as a sign of a genuine desire for a new episode in transatlantic relations.⁸⁸ As a symbol of transatlantic solidarity NATO stated during the Bush visit that 26 partners agreed to assist in training the Iraqi security forces within or outside Iraq. However, France and Germany kept refusing to send troops to Iraq and offered to train Iraqi security forces outside Iraq.⁸⁹

The transatlantic rapprochement was replete with many indicators. The United States' endeavors to exploit the division among its European allies were brought to an end. In return, European states which opposed the war halted their condemnation of the United States about Iraq. Rather, they supported the political transition in Iraq through their contributions in training the Iraqi judges, police and other law enforcement officers. A global conference on Iraq, including "80 states and international organizations" was held in Brussels in June 2005 in complete European-American coordination and Bush went to Europe three times in the first six months of his second term.⁹⁰ More importantly, another transatlantic convergence concerning the Iranian nuclear file was marked despite differing American and European perceptions of the Iranian problem.⁹¹ Thus, a mutual pragmatic wish for a transatlantic rapprochement was a pressing need for both sides of the transatlantic alliance because each had learned a lesson. The lesson was that they needed each other to pursue their common interests, even if they disagreed on certain other topics. Andrew Moravcsik showed how Europeans need the United States and how the United States also need the Europeans in his own words:

The Iraq crisis offers two basic lessons. The first, for Europeans, is that American hawks were right. Unilateral intervention to coerce regime change can be a cost-effective way to deal with rogue states...[and the US] can go it alone if it has to...The second lesson, for Americans, is that moderate skeptics on both sides of the Atlantic were also right. Winning a peace is much harder

⁸⁸ Gordon, "The End of the Bush Revolution," 81.

⁸⁹ Archich, "European Views and Policies towards the Middle East," 8.

⁹⁰ Marcin Zaborowski, "Friends United? Recalibrating Transatlantic Relations in the 21st Century," in: *Friends Again? EU-US Relations after the Crisis*, ed. Marcin Zaborowski (Paris: European Union, Institute for Security Studies, 2006), 214.

⁹¹ Gordon, "The End of the Bush Revolution," 82.

than winning a war. Intervention [in Iraq] is cheap in the short run but expensive in the long run.⁹²

The transatlantic propensity to reunite its front gained a fresh impetus by changes of government in the major European states that had opposed the Iraq war. A new government led by Angela Merkel came to power in Germany in October 2005.⁹³ The Merkel government considered the “transatlantic relationship as the foundation of Germany's and Europe's common security” as it was formally stipulated in the new German national security strategy, known as the White Paper on German Security Policy.⁹⁴ This German position was further clarified when Merkel indicated at the 2006 Munich Security Conference that “NATO is the primary security organization” for Germany.⁹⁵ In the first of May 2007, Nicolas Sarkozy, well-known for his pro-American tendency, became president of France. This was doubtlessly in favor of more transatlantic convergences in general and in the Iraq issue in particular.⁹⁶ France’s ensuing Iraq policies indicated new cooperative relations between the United States and France. In June 2007, France reinforced the American plans in Iraq and called for a more international endeavor to be led by the United Nations to bring an end to the cycle of violence and sectarian war in Iraq. France even proposed mediation between sectarian groups in Iraq.⁹⁷ The closest British ally to the Bush administration, Tony Blair, was replaced by Gordon Brown who made a distinction between the American and the British positions. In other words, Brown attempted to swing the pendulum to the middle ground between the long-lasting American British special relations and his aspiration to be at the crux of the European action.⁹⁸

At the American domestic level, the new American administration was mainly characterized by strict practicality embodied, for example, by Deputy Secretary of State Robert Zoellick, Undersecretary of State Nicholas Burns, and North Korea negotiator Christopher Hill. This “pragmatic team” epitomized more pragmatic and less ideological transatlantic relations.⁹⁹ On the other hand, the year 2006 witnessed a set back to the Bush administration. The sweeping

⁹² Andrew Moravcsik, “Striking a New Transatlantic Bargain,” *Foreign Affairs* 82, no. 4(2003):74.

⁹³ Peters, “Cooperation, Conflict and Crisis: the Iraq War,” 18.

⁹⁴ Paul Belkin, “German Foreign and Security Policy: Trends and Transatlantic Implications” (CRS Report for Congress, October 3, 2007), 3.

⁹⁵ Herd, “Constructive Transatlantic Strategic Dissonance,” 370.

⁹⁶ Roland Flamini, “As Transatlantic Relations Shift, France Seeks a Role in Iraq,” *World Politics Review*, 28 Aug (2007), <http://www.worldpoliticsreview.com/articles/1068/as-transatlantic-relations-shift-france-seeks-a-role-in-iraq.html>.

⁹⁷ Ibid.,

⁹⁸ Nibleit, “Choosing between America and Europe,” 627.

⁹⁹ Gordon, “The End of the Bush Revolution,” 81-82.

victory of the Democratic Party in the congressional elections on 7 November 2006 put another constraint on the Bush administration to launch a provocative foreign policy in its second term. The Democratic Party managed to gain power over both the legislative branches, which doubtlessly meant a reconsideration of and a restraint on American foreign policies, particularly in Iraq.¹⁰⁰ These electoral results combined with the worsening situation in Iraq, which had deteriorated almost to a civil and sectarian war, were both a reason for and an indicator of a more cooperative American policy towards Europe:

President Bush, after the mid-election results and as a consequence of a failing foreign policy, indicates that he will adopt a more bi-partisan domestic and multilateral foreign policy, meeting allies halfway.¹⁰¹

In addition, the American economy started to suffer from a rising public deficit due to the costs of the wars in Afghanistan and Iraq. Indicators of a coming economic crisis were in the horizon. Accordingly, the United States moved into a fatal economic crisis that undermined and put huge pressure on its “power, hard and soft.”¹⁰²

Yet, despite the transatlantic convergence since the year 2005, Iraq entered into its most devastating situation in February 2006 when the sectarian war between the 'Shi'i-Sunni' militias reached its peak. All analysts considered Iraq to be in a genuine civil war. This devastating conflict undermined the political developments of 2005. The United States vigorously tried to get out of this predicament by declaring a new policy for Iraq which became known as “The Surge,” on 10 January 2007. The primary element of this policy was to increase the number of US troops as an essential requirement to halt the rebellion and secure Bagdad, coinciding with empowering the Iraqi security and military apparatus through solid training and better developed equipments.¹⁰³ After “The Surge” was applied in Iraq, the violence reached its lowest rate and the Iraqi case was “absent from the transatlantic agenda in recent years”. A security accord was negotiated and endorsed between the United States and the Iraqi government on November 27, 2008. This pact stipulated the procedures for an American withdrawal from Iraq by 2011 at the

¹⁰⁰ Esther Brimmer, “Seeing Blue: American Visions of the European Union” (Chaillot paper. no.105, European Union, Institute for Security Studies, Paris, September 2007), 71.

¹⁰¹ Herd, “Constructive Transatlantic Strategic Dissonance,” 378.

¹⁰² Iwan Morgan, “The Indebted Empire: America's Current-Account Deficit Problem,” *International Politics*, no. 45 (2008): 96.

¹⁰³ Jabar, “Iraq Four Years after US Invasion,” 1-2.

latest, and handing over the “Green Zone” in Bagdad to the Iraqi government by January 2009.¹⁰⁴

A political earthquake came to the vanguard of the transatlantic relations, when President Barak Obama was elected late in 2008 as the first American black president. Obama’s election was met with eagerness and optimism in Europe. There was a mounting aspiration to bring transatlantic relations back to life after eight years of oscillation, from a striking crack in Bush’s first term to a pragmatic and modest convergence in the second.¹⁰⁵ In his campaign for the presidency, Obama admitted that the war in Iraq had been a mistake and a movement away from the right direction which is the war against terrorism in Afghanistan. Obama undertook a clear-cut pledge to pull out of Iraq as soon as possible in what he called a “responsible and phased withdrawal”. On 21 January, his second day in the presidency, Obama convened with his consultants and asked them to start planning an exit strategy for the American troops in Iraq.¹⁰⁶

In brief, both domestic and international factors helped to resuscitate transatlantic relations after the grand split over Iraq in 2002-2003. In Bush’s first term, there was a sharp American vision that force alone can direct the events. However, faced by failures outside and setbacks inside, Bush’s rhetoric started to be soften in his second term since he realized that the United States could not act alone to accomplish its interests and that its power was limited without the help of its allies. In other words, the United States’s status, image, economy, and the global trust in it as a benign hegemonic power were in decline. When the United States took a unilateral direction, it isolated itself from the world and particularly from its long standing European allies. Ivo Daalder described this idea by his own words:

The lesson of Iraq...was that when you lead badly, few follow. This, ultimately, was the real danger of the Bush revolution. America’s friends and allies might not be able to stop Washington from doing as it wished, but neither would they necessarily be willing to come to its aid when their help was most needed.¹⁰⁷

Daalder doomed that the United States can go it alone when it comes to military operations but it cannot guarantee the Europeans support when it acts unilaterally and leads badly

¹⁰⁴ John K. Glenn, “Foreign Policy Challenges for the Obama Administration” (European Policy Analysis, Swedish Institute for European Policy Studies, no. 1, January. 2009), 2.

¹⁰⁵ Sven Biscop, “President Obama, Europe and the Middle East,” *Israel Journal of Foreign Affairs* III, no. 1(2009): 1.

¹⁰⁶ Glenn, “Foreign Policy Challenges for Obama,” 3.

¹⁰⁷ Daalder, *America Unbound: the Bush Revolution*, 193.

▪ Transatlantic Split over Iraq 2003: Reasons for Divergences

Transatlantic relations are multi-faceted and multi-leveled relations. Therefore, explaining the reasons for transatlantic divergences and convergences regarding Iraq combines many levels of explanations, the US level, the EU level, the European member states level, and even a level within the European member states themselves – the Atlantics and Europeanists. Accordingly, multilateral theoretical explanations are to point out the overall reasons for the tensions in transatlantic relations regarding the Middle East, the reasons for divergences between the US and EU as an entity, then between the US and the EU member states, particularly France and Germany, explanations of the support of other member states for the US war in Iraq, and explanations of the division among European states in Iraq. After that the reasons of convergences between the US and the states that opposed the war after the American military invasion to Iraq shall be verified.

It is essential to dwell on the wider sources for the divergences in the transatlantic relations towards the Middle East as a starting point to explain the Iraq case. One of the main constructivist reasons for the transatlantic disagreements and strains concerning the Middle East lies in their diverse historic familiarity with the Middle East. Europe has a longer history than the United States with the Middle East, due to the crusade campaigns in the Medieval Ages and the colonial past of many Arab states. Europeans have learned their lesson that might is not an appropriate tool in the Middle East.¹⁰⁸ In addition, a “European strategic culture,” which materialized after World War II, relied on the efficiency of the tools of “negotiation, commerce, international law, and multilateralism” in international affairs, while the United States relied on “coercive diplomacy, the use of force, unilateralism, and the projection of US values abroad” to achieve its goals.¹⁰⁹ Secondly, from a realistic perspective, the geographical and demographic significance of the Middle East to Europe is not the same as to the United States. Insecurity, chaos and instability in the Middle East represents a direct threat to Europe due to its geographical proximity to the region, which leads to a rising terrorism in Europe and increasing illegal immigration from the Middle East to Europe. Thirdly, from a realistic perspective, Europe and the United States differ in perceiving threats and the suitable tools to address them.¹¹⁰ As for

¹⁰⁸ Archich, “European Views and Policies towards the Middle East,” 2.

¹⁰⁹ Dalia Dassa Kaye, “Bound to Cooperate? Transatlantic Policy in the Middle East,” *The Washington Quarterly* 27, no.1 (2003-2004): 186.

¹¹⁰ Archich, “European Views and Policies towards the Middle East,” 2-3.

the threat perception, while most European states perceive terrorism as an inside threat, the United States recognize it mostly as an external danger, as the September 11 attacks signified. As for the appropriate tools, the United States has always expressed for a long time its willingness and capability to address terrorism through force and the September 11 attacks reinforced this tendency in the Bush administration. European states have always opted for economic and social actions such as diplomatic pressure and economic conditionality to face terrorism and have constantly thought about power as the last resort to fight terrorism.¹¹¹

Fourthly, both Europe and the United States espouse differing approaches in addressing the “rouge states” in the Middle East. Whereas Europe adopts a “dialogue and trade strategy,” the United States considers connections and talks with these rouge states an award to their behavior, which would lead to more devastating consequences. Instead, the United States relies on military force and punishment to change the deeds of these rouges states. Finally, and from a liberal perspective, unlike Europe, which prefers many-sided actions through international organizations, the United States is enthusiastic and well-prepared to take one-sided actions in addressing international issues and more willing to use its armed forces when necessary to protect its national security.¹¹² Numerous approaches were employed to give explanations to the rationales of the transatlantic split over Iraq. The combined neo-realist, neo-liberalist and constructivist reasons are as follows.

- Neo-realist Reasons: The US – EU Level:

The transatlantic split over Iraq was the peak of the transatlantic tensions over the Middle East that have rapidly been emerging following the demise of the Soviet threat and the end of the Cold War. The common Soviet danger, which operated for a long time as a solid tie between Europe and the United States, vanished with the collapse of the Soviet Union in 1990. In spite of the materialization of other common threats to the transatlantic partners, such as terrorism and WMD, these threats were not as sufficient as the greater communist threat. Above and beyond, there was no concrete agreement between Europe and the United States on the most appropriate way to address these new threats.¹¹³ Therefore, transatlantic divergences over Iraq in 2002-2003 can be explained in the wider perspective of a growing world power structure. The United States turned out to be a unipolar power after the disappearance of the Soviet power in the post-cold

¹¹¹ Onat, “Tension and Cooperation in Transatlantic Relations,” 45.

¹¹² Ibid., 41-42.

¹¹³ Ibid., 43.

war era. Many states, including France, articulated their concerns about a unipolar world system led by the United States. These concerns were manifested by French Foreign Minister Hubert Vedrine in 1999 when he depicted the United States' power as a “hyper power” and called for a “multipolar” world system. This tendency was not far from Chirac's call for a multipolar world system, in which Europe can take part. Hence, the crisis over Iraq illustrated the tendency of the unipolar power to ignore the other powers in the world, the global organizations, and the international legitimacy.¹¹⁴ The vanishing of a “balancing superpower” weakened the security interdependence between the United States and Europe and reinforced the United States' tendency for unilateralism in international affairs and Europe's yearning for a larger international status.¹¹⁵

When it comes to military capabilities, the United States is the sole power, whereas Europe is dependent on the United States and is considered a civilian power. John Bolton, the US Ambassador to the UN during the Bush Administration, mockingly and arrogantly asked for changing the veto system in the Security Council to a one veto for the United States as real expression of the “distribution of power in the world.”¹¹⁶ The United States' military power “dwarfs not only Europe's military power but also everyone else's.” This American feeling of absolute military puissance has led to a more determined global agenda, particularly after the September 11 attacks, to impose its interests by means of its own uncontested power. On the other side of the Atlantic, Europe's core focus was increasing the soft power, particularly the European economic and “social attractiveness model” as a sufficient tool to address global and regional threats. The United States perceived this European military weakness as a European tendency to count on the Americans to handle dangerous security threats while Europe tackles other, more pleasant issues:

For the US, this European view [a civilian power] looks a lot like free-riding, defining Europe's role as addressing the “soft” or “nice” aspects of international politics, leaving the tough, grubby, military aspects of security issues to the United States.¹¹⁷

¹¹⁴ Glen, “Multilateralism in a Unipolar World,” 318.

¹¹⁵ Thomas L. Ilgen, “The Atlantic Alliance and the Integration of Europe,” in: *Hard Power, Soft Power and the Future of Transatlantic Relations*, ed. Thomas L. Ilgen (England: Ashgate, 2006), 9.

¹¹⁶ Adrian Hyde-Price, “‘Continental Drift’: Transatlantic Relations and American Unipolarity”(paper presented at the 31st Annual BISA Conference, University of Leicester, Department of Politics and International Relations, 18-20th December 2006), 2-3.

¹¹⁷ Gregory F. Treverton, “A Post-Modern Transatlantic Alliance,” in: *Hard Power, Soft Power and the Future of Transatlantic Relations*, ed. Thomas L. Ilgen (England: Ashgate, 2006), 48-49.

Robert Kagan illustrated this transatlantic military discrepancy in his famous metaphor that Americans are living on an “anarchic Hobbesian” planet where power is alive, reasonable, and working vigorously, whereas laws and regulations are dead and irrelevant. Europeans, on the other hand, are living on a completely different “Kantian” planet where sets of laws and regulations are the sole meal.¹¹⁸ With such unevenness in the military power between the United States and Europe, the metaphor of bandwagoning with and balancing against the United States reached its climax. Some European states chose to counter the American hegemony while others opted for coalitions with the United States. The Iraq issue can be applied to this metaphor, where core Europe (Germany and France) opposed the war, while Atlantic and New Europe opted for bandwagoning with the United States.¹¹⁹ Consequently, the asymmetry of power between the United States and Europe explains why Europe sticks to the multilateral organizations as a tool to bind America’s unbounded power and control its ambitions. This explanation can be reinforced by the argument of a former French foreign minister - “were France to possess the kind of the power that the United States now enjoys, Paris would be even more cavalier in its exercise.”¹²⁰

The terrorist attacks of September 11, which caused an American feeling of vulnerability, acted together with the American feeling of its uncontested power to produce a revolt in American foreign policy under the Bush administration. This tremendous transformation in American foreign policy was clearly represented in its new National Security Strategy 2002 which prompted unilateralism, preemption, the use of military force, and regime change. Iraq was at the core of this strategy, particularly in what became later known as the Bush doctrine.¹²¹ In fact, 9/11 conferred an enormous momentum to an existing American policy, developed during the first term of the Bush administration, to use its military force to redesign the globe according to the American interests. The Middle East, particularly Iraq, was the starting point: 9-11 [gave a]... new impetus [to] the Bush administration to go off in search of dragons to slay.... [It] was particularly important in creating the domestic political consensus for a strategy of primacy, using American power to reshape crucial regions in the international system in

¹¹⁸ Robert Kagan, “Power and Weakness,” Policy Review 113(January 2002), <http://www.mtholyoke.edu/acad/intrel/bush/kagan.htm>.

¹¹⁹ Trevorton, “A Post-Modern Transatlantic Alliance,” 50.

¹²⁰ Lieber, *the American Era: Power and Strategy*, 73.

¹²¹ Philip, “The End of the Bush Revolution,” 77-78.

accordance with the priorities and interests of the United States ... Iraq was a “perfect storm” that united ... the Bush administration around a common project.¹²²

The New American National Security Strategy 2002 was being condensed in the Bush doctrine which was largely considered a “strategic and philosophical” validation for the American conquest to Iraq.¹²³ Two rationales were behind the Bush doctrine; the first was to liberate the Americans’ pursuit for their interests from any limitations or restraints, whether they come from its “allies” or from “international institutions.” The second was shifting the global status quo in favor of an American empire by its military force. These two rationales produced the triangle of the Bush doctrine: unilateralism, preemption, and regime change.¹²⁴ This American unilateral and preemptive tendency was negatively and depressingly perceived by Europe, particularly by those states that opposed the war in Iraq, which considered the “US hegemonic power as greater than Iraq in terms of long-term global stability.”¹²⁵

A comparison between the two strategic documents the ESS 2003 and the NSS 2002 demonstrated that the United States and Europe differ on perceiving terrorism, rogue states and WMD as threats. Therefore the transatlantic allies were at variance about the most appropriate tools to address them. The split over Iraq in 2003 was nothing but a divide between the transatlantic allies over the “nature and scope of the terrorist threat,” the rogue states and WMD threats.¹²⁶ Diverse transatlantic perceptions of WMD, terrorism, and the rogue states’ threats may explain the rift over Iraq. As for the WMD threat, the Bush administrations’ focus went to direct questions concerning “who has, or is supposed to develop WMD” and spontaneously linked this to the threat of rogue states. Along with the Bush administration’s threat perception, the “political nature of the state” is the major threat rather than its capabilities. Therefore, “deterrence and containment” are useless and irrelevant tools, whereas “regime change” is the best and most practical tool to face the rogue states’ pursuit of WMD. Conversely, Europe’s focus goes to direct questions concerning the “states’ capabilities” instead of the nature of regimes and

¹²² Hyde-Price, “‘Continental Drift: Transatlantic Relations,’” 12.

¹²³ Onat, “Tension and Cooperation in Transatlantic Relations,” 47.

¹²⁴ Daalder, *America Unbound: the Bush Revolution*, 12-13.

¹²⁵ Onat, “Tension and Cooperation in Transatlantic Relations,” 47.

¹²⁶ Henry R. Nau, “Iraq and Previous Transatlantic Crises: Divided by Threat, Not Institutions or Values,” in: *the End of the West: Crisis and Change in the Atlantic Order*, eds. Jeffrey Anderson, et.al. (Ithaca and London: Cornell University Press, 2008), 83.

it does not establish a correlation between regimes and terrorist threats as the Americans do.¹²⁷ “Effective multilateralism” is the basis for the “European strategy for combating proliferation of WMD.” Accordingly, cooperation of the international community is a necessary prerequisite for solving these problems.¹²⁸

Iraq was at the crux of these transatlantic different perceptions. In the Iraq crisis, Europe did not perceive the Iraqi threat as the United States did, and it was not convinced of the necessity of using military force to address it but rather regarded “soft power” as the appropriate and the required reaction. The United States, on the other hand, perceived the Iraqi threat as highly rigorous and severe, particularly if the Iraqi regime provides the non-state actors the WMD. Therefore, the United States decided to take the fight to the “Middle East (the Iraq front)” instead of fighting against terrorism on the American lands.¹²⁹ Hence, the roots of the transatlantic divergences over Iraq lied in the question at what time and at which place the war might be useful. The United States adopted “imperial perceptions” of threat, which recognizes the terrorist menace as highly severe and requires preemption. In contrast, some Europeans states, mainly France, espouse “multipolar perceptions,” trying to balance the power of the United States because the threat of its hegemony is more dangerous than that of Iraq. The EU, too, espouses “multilateral perceptions” which seek for the application of the international rules and regulations.¹³⁰

Following the collapse of the Communist block and the materialization of the United States as the only superpower, the interests and foreign policy goals of the transatlantic allies moved considerably away from each other. The United States marched into its universal role and pursued hegemony and supremacy through its military might and disdained any international regulation, organization or framework that undermined its ability to act as a hegemonic power. Europe, on the other hand, went for securing a peaceful globe through a legal “international order.”¹³¹ This diversity in interests and goals was further exacerbated by George W. Bush's

¹²⁷ Franz Eder, Gerhard Mangott, and Martin Senn, “Understanding Mars and Venus: A Model for Security Policy Analysis,” in: *Transatlantic Discord: Combating Terrorism and Proliferation, Preventing Crises*, eds. Franz Eder, et.al (Germany, Baden –Baden: Nomos, 2007), 18-22.

¹²⁸ Mattias Dembinski, “Transatlantic Cooperation or Discord: the United States, the European Union and Nuclear Non-Proliferation,” in: *Transatlantic Discord: Combating Terrorism and Proliferation, Preventing Crises*, eds. Franz Eder, et.al. (Germany, Baden –Baden: Nomos, 2007), 47.

¹²⁹ Nau, “Iraq and Previous Transatlantic Crises,” 98.

¹³⁰ Ibid., 101-106.

¹³¹ David Clark, “European Foreign Policy and American Primacy,” *International Politics* 45, no. 3(2008):282-283.

revolutionary foreign policy which embraced a “hegemonist's foreign policy” versus a European “globalist foreign policy” that gives a great value to universal collaboration to address threats. Therefore, while Europe's main foreign policy goal is a secure, peaceful and democratic Europe through its attractiveness model and pays much attention to domestic issues such as pushing European integration forward and facing immigration, the United States conversely focuses on “global security issues” such as “terrorism, WMD, and rogue states.”¹³²

A remarkably realistic analysis of the transatlantic divergences over Iraq was given by Andres Wivel, who employed two wide policy options to explain the behavior of the European member states in the Iraq crisis. Either the European states choose “hard or soft bandwagoning” with the United States, or “hard or soft balancing” against the United States. However, these options mainly rely on the “relative power, the relative ideology, and the relative security” of the European member states.¹³³ As for the Iraq crisis, the states which rejected the war mainly rebuffed the “tool” not the “goal” of the American strategy in Iraq. Even the country that opposed the war most, France, was willing to use force if Iraq did not fully comply with the inspection rules, and asked for more time to search for the WMD. Directly after the war ended, both Europe and the United States enthusiastically attempted to heal the rifts in their relationship and move forward to an inclusive reconciliation. Therefore, the behavior of the opposing European camp, mainly France and Germany, was a kind of “soft balancing,” whereas the behavior of the supporting European camp, mainly Britain, Spain, Italy, Denmark, the Netherlands, Poland and the new EU member states was a kind of “hard bandwagoning.”¹³⁴ France preferred soft balancing against the United States as a part of its “conflict over leadership in Europe,” its desire to have a position autonomous from the United States and its desire for a multipolar system. Germany shared the French desire for multilateralism. As for Britain, hard bandwagoning was essential as a way to gain the benefits of the special relationship with the

¹³² Onat, “Tension and Cooperation in Transatlantic Relations,” 58-59.

¹³³ Anders Wivel, “Hard Bandwagoning or Soft Balancing? Exploring the Incentives for European Security Strategies in the American World Order” (paper presented for Presentation at the Panel 'The Transatlantic Relationship: Power and Institutions Reconsidered', 47th Conference of International Studies Association, March 22-23, 2006), 4.

¹³⁴ ____, “Explaining European Behavior in the Unipolar World Order: the Role of Institutions, Strategy and Military Action” (paper presented at the Panel 'European Security Governance', 48th Conference of the International Studies Association, Chicago, IL, USA, February 28 March 2007), 27-28.

hegemon and at the same time to constrain the Franco-German leadership ambitions on the European continent.¹³⁵

Another realistic explanation of this French and German (soft balancing) opposition to the war was that both states were not “consulted” by the United States in the decision making process to go to war and that the United States was not willing to find a middle ground with them or even to show some esteem to their positions. Therefore, the opposition of these states was rather an endeavor to gain political weight and influence against the United States. Therefore, “it was not just about Iraq,” it was not just about the means and tools, but it was also about the “greater decision making paradigm that underlines the world order, at least as directed by the West.”¹³⁶

- Neo-Realist Reasons: The US – European Member States Level

The split over Iraq divided the European continent's positions towards the United States into “five Europes”: “Atlantic Europe,” “Core Europe,” “New Europe,” “Non-aligned Europe” and “Periphery Europe.” These conceptions are nothing but a reference to the different attitudes of the EU member states towards the United States.¹³⁷ Atlantic Europe refers to the UK, Netherlands, Denmark and Portugal which have constantly expressed their ultimate alignment with the United States' positions. Core Europe stands for France and Germany as the major leaders of the European Union. New Europe represents the new NATO and EU entrants, particularly the Central and Eastern European States. Non-aligned Europe refers to Finland, Sweden, Austria and Ireland, whereas Periphery Europe stands for the European states that are not members of NATO or the EU.¹³⁸

These different European attitudes became increasingly noticeable in the Iraq crisis. The different European positions in this crisis emanated from the long-term European differences over two contradicting visions of the role of Europe in world affairs. The first was held by UK, which called for an absolute support for the United States while attempting to “influence it and to drive in US action in international consensus.” The second was held by France, standing for an independent Europe that balances the United States in international affairs. These were the two

¹³⁵ Ibid., 34-35.

¹³⁶ Judith. Kelley, “Strategic Non-cooperation as Soft Balancing: Why Iraq Was not Just about Iraq,” *International Politics*, 42 (2005), 166, www.palgrave-journals.com/ip.html.

¹³⁷ Herd, “Constructive Transatlantic Strategic Dissonance,” 368.

¹³⁸ Forsberg, *Divided West*, 2.

poles that the other European states revolved around.¹³⁹ The research will investigate the realist reasons behind the positions of the Atlantic Europe (the UK, Spain and Italy), the Core Europe (France and Germany), and the New Europe (Poland and most the new EU member states).

The United Kingdom's pro-American position in the war in Iraq can be explained by its long-term special relations with the United States. In a sense, the UK's special alliance with the United States expresses a constant British foreign policy goal: to balance France's long-term aspirations to take the helm of Europe autonomously from the United States and a fear that a French-German alliance diminishes Britain's role on the continent. In addition, keeping close and innate relations with the United States will definitely reinforce the British status and its global actions. For that reason, Iraq presented an opportunity for Britain to consolidate this strategic relationship with the sole superpower regardless of whether the action was legal or not.¹⁴⁰ Consequently, the British position in Iraq was a defensive response to the Franco-German aspiration to take the helm in Europe and it was in the British national interest to participate in the global decision making process. Italy's position in the war can be explained by the long term Italian desire to balance between Atlanticism and Europeanism. At war time, the Italian pendulum swung towards the United States in order to reinforce Italy's status within the European Union, particularly vis-à-vis France and Germany.¹⁴¹ Hence, the Italian pro-American position in the war was an Italian yearning for a powerful role in Europe in relation to France and Germany.¹⁴² The Spanish support for the United States was surprising since Spain was well-known for its European tendencies. Despite the overwhelming popular rejection of the war, Aznar's government supported the United States. Many analysts argued that the United States pledged to help Spain in fighting the Spanish separation movement (ETA).¹⁴³

The French-German rejection to the war can be explained by the Franco-German desire to have a say in the international arena. Both states recognized that the United States under the Bush administration espoused unilateral, hegemonic, and non consultation tendencies towards its allies, particularly in the thorny issues of war and peace like the Iraqi case. This French-German tendency to challenge the United States' dominance and hegemony can explain their pursuit to create a "European defence capability" independently from NATO in April of 2003 (together

¹³⁹ Spyer, "Europe and Iraq: Test Case," 96.

¹⁴⁰ Forsberg, *Divided West*, 38-44.

¹⁴¹ Del Sarto, "Italy's Politics Without Policy," 135.

¹⁴² Stahl, "Understanding the 'Great Split' in Iraq Crisis," 23.

¹⁴³ Joaquin, "Spain's Return to 'Old Europe'," 13.

with Belgium and Luxembourg). This attempt severely outraged the United States and was considered a challenge to its power.¹⁴⁴

Most of the new member states shared similar security concerns and believed that the United States and NATO were the only genuine guarantee for their own security which they perceived as highly threatened by Russia.¹⁴⁵ In addition, these countries share the view of Italy, Spain and Denmark that they should have a say in Europe and should therefore stand against the French-German leadership which might come at the expense of their interests as small states.¹⁴⁶ Moreover, there was a desire, particularly in Poland, to gain economic and political status from the United States after the war. But most importantly, it was the same suffering that Germany and France felt when the United States did not bother to consult them about the war. These countries suffered the same when France and Germany thought that they will doubtlessly go behind them without consultation. Hence, the support of these states was motivated by many reasons; the strongest among them was that they were frightened more of the German-French influence on the continent than of US hegemony over the globe.¹⁴⁷

- Neo-Liberalist Reasons for the Divergences over the War:

Transatlantic divergences over Iraq can be traced back to a multi-leveled value gap between the United States and Europe at some stage in the 1990s, which definitely led to a larger divergence over “material interests and threat perceptions.”¹⁴⁸ This transatlantic value gap includes many areas such as international affairs where the countries diverge over the value of the international order, international institutions, such as NATO and the UN, and the required tools to face threats. The value gap also includes a divergence over social and economic policies, particularly over the appropriate role of the state, and the countries also diverge over questions of faith and morality.¹⁴⁹ The transatlantic value gap concerning international affairs stems from the fact that both the United States and Europe espouse contradicting visions about the best way to create a safer world order. The American vision, particularly during the Bush administration, highly appreciated and believed in the maximum utility of its unilateral endeavors to make the world safer and more secure. This American attitude was highly evident in the Bush

¹⁴⁴ Forsberg, *Divided West*, 53-58.

¹⁴⁵ *Ibid.*, 70.

¹⁴⁶ Leon T. Hadar, “Mending the U.S.-European Rift over the Middle East,” (Policy Analysis, no .485, August 20, 2003), 8, <http://www.cato.org/pubs/pas/pa485.pdf>.

¹⁴⁷ Forsberg, *Divided West*, 71-72.

¹⁴⁸ *Ibid.*, 24.

¹⁴⁹ Clark, “European Policy and American Primacy,” 284.

administration's vision towards both the UN and even towards NATO. The United States considered NATO a political hindrance to its ability to move forward, and rather saw it as just a "tool box" to provide the military support needed by the "coalition of willing."¹⁵⁰

The same applies to the United States' vision of the UN; like other international institutions, it is considered a burden and the United States strives to make it less effective. Europeans, on the other hand, were highly convinced that collaboration among partners in an institutionalized framework, such as in NATO or the UN, and global compromises are the best ways to achieve a secure world. Instead of unilateralism, the European states perceived "multilateral deterrence and containment" as the principal tools to achieve their purposes with the highest gains and the lowest price.¹⁵¹ Consequently, there was a transatlantic split over the usefulness of international institutions; whereas the United States considered "multilateralism a means to an end", Europeans considered it an "end in itself."¹⁵² In fact, this transatlantic divergence was understandable in the Iraq case, where the United States resorted to the UN to attain a resolution to launch the war. However, this decision was not a sign that the United States embraced multilateralism, but rather an effort to assist its closest supporter, British Prime Minister Tony Blair, who faced an overwhelming "80 % public opposition to the war if it was launched without a UN mandate (opposition to the war went down to 20% with a UN mandate)." Therefore, the United Nations was not an end in itself, but rather a means to achieve the American goals. Once the American administration realized that it will not get another resolution to justify the war, it abandoned the UN. Conversely, most of the European States that rejected the war have a long history of loyalty to the values of 'multilateralism'. Accordingly, European states considered multilateralism a moral value and an end in itself.¹⁵³

The transatlantic value gap also includes differences over social and economic policies, particularly differences over the suitable role of the state and its budgetary tasks. In the United States, the major or even the only task of the state is to secure and defend its citizens from any possible threat and even to get involved in any place in the globe when it is essential to the security of its people. Conversely, Europeans believe in the significance of the state as the being chiefly responsible for securing the social welfare of its people, providing them with their basic

¹⁵⁰ Forsberg, *Divided West*, 134.

¹⁵¹ Ibid., P. 135.

¹⁵² Daniel W. Drezner, "Lost in Translation: the Transatlantic Divide over Diplomacy," (University of Chicago, January 2006, 3-4, <http://www.danieldrezner.com/research/LostInTranslation.doc>.

¹⁵³ Glen, "Multilateralism in A Unipolar World," 317-318.

needs and assuring a better life. The transatlantic divergences over the value of institutions combined with their divergences over the appropriate role of the state highly contribute to explaining the different policies adopted by the United States and Europe. Whereas the United States is mainly interested in “hard power” (defense and security), Europeans are mainly interested in “soft power” (social and economic welfare).¹⁵⁴

Another value gap became evident in a number of domestic courses of actions on both sides of the Atlantic. These divergences encompassed the death penalty, the role of religion, and the social safety net. The gap was further exacerbated by the Bush administration’s tendency to neglect multilateral diplomacy and adopt assertive unilateralism.¹⁵⁵ In other words, both Europe and the United States diverge on issues of gun ownership, capital punishment, and the control of a religious and patriotic American vision compared to a European secular and post-modern vision of the events. This was explained by the High representative of CFSP in Europe when he stated that the United States perceive “things in a religious context” which increases the complexity of the way that Europe can “deal with” the United States for the reason that Europe is “secular.”¹⁵⁶ This transatlantic gap in “faith and morality” increased when the Bush administration came to power. No one can deny that “God, guns, and gays” issues have lent a hand to George W. Bush in his electoral campaign to the presidency, while it would make no sense if a European leader campaigned over these issues.¹⁵⁷ Therefore, transatlantic divergences over values can partly explain why France and Germany refused to support the United States in Iraq. And even the states that supported the United States in the war, with the exception of the UK, were not convinced of the war and were not adopting the values of the United States but rather rhetorically supported it to preserve their long friendship. They did not necessarily share the values of unilateralism, Even Britain that has more willingness to use its military force, preferred multilateralism and the legal coverage of the UN than the United States.

Domestic politics in both the United States and Europe can also partly explain some reasons for the transatlantic divergence over Iraq. In the United States, a combination of the September 11 attacks and a neoconservative administration led to a radical change in American foreign policy. This change was marked in the New American Security Strategy in 2002 which

¹⁵⁴ Onat, “Tension and Cooperation in Transatlantic Relations,” 62-63.

¹⁵⁵ Rubin P. James, “Building a New Atlantic Alliance,” *Foreign Affairs* 87, no. 4(2008): 4.

¹⁵⁶ Forsberg, *Divided West*, 27.

¹⁵⁷ Clark, “European Policy and the American Primacy,” 285.

adopted unilateralism, preemption, regime change, and a disdain for international institutions such as NATO and the UN. All these concepts were shorthand for what became known as the 'Bush doctrine'. Jim George exemplifies this doctrine by his own words:

A doctrine characterized by...its support for the use of overwhelming force in face of threat or even potential threat; its support to pre-emption as official strategic policy; its inclination towards unilateralism; its hostile attitudes towards...multilateral institutions (e.g. the UN);...and its ideological representation of America's exceptionalism.¹⁵⁸

The war in Iraq was then a manifestation for the Bush doctrine and the neoconservative schedule. Accordingly, transatlantic divergences over Iraq can be partly explained by the neoconservative long-term desire to topple the Iraq regime regardless the opinions of its allies.¹⁵⁹ On the other hand, Europe is a divided continent, particularly when it comes to security issues. There is no one voice for Europe but the voice of the national member states when it comes to the Middle East in particular. Timo Behr emphasizes on the diverse national perspectives within the European continent as the major reason for not having a united and solid European response to any security issue in the Middle East:

The different national foreign policy traditions, driven by opposing views of identity, interests, and threats, have been the underlying reason for Europe's confused Middle East policy.¹⁶⁰

The transatlantic divergences and even the divergences within Europe over the support of the war against Iraq simply reinforced the fact that the domestic environment and political changes in both Europe and the United States outlined the nature of transatlantic relations. Electoral changes weaken the realist philosophy that states are just unitary actors.¹⁶¹ To signify, the German rejection was partly caused by the overwhelming domestic public rejection of the war and Iraq became the striking electoral card in Schröder's campaign.¹⁶² Ironically, had the opposition party in Germany been in power at that time, Germany would have endorsed the war.¹⁶³ The same principle can be applied to France, where Presidential elections were on the horizon and the French public overwhelmingly rejected the war in Iraq, not to mention the large

¹⁵⁸ George, "Leo Strauss, Neo-conservatism," 176.

¹⁵⁹ Ibid., 195-196.

¹⁶⁰ Timo Behr, "Enduring Differences? France, Germany and Europe's Middle East Dilemma," *European Integration* 30, no.1 (2008): 80.

¹⁶¹ Herd, "Constructive Transatlantic Strategic Dissonance," 366.

¹⁶² Forsberg, "German Foreign Policy," 218.

¹⁶³ Jackson Janes, "The Change in Government and Transatlantic Relations," *German Politics and Society* 24, no.78 (2006):126.

portion of French Muslims, which partly explains the French rejection of the war.¹⁶⁴ Spain and Italy are other examples of the effect of domestic politics on transatlantic relations. The Spanish conservative government, under the American pledge to give a hand in countering ETA, gambled and supported the United States in its war in Iraq and even sent troops. However, this choice was quickly corrected by the new socialist government led by Jose Luis Zapatero, which pulled the Spanish troops out from Iraq as soon after the election.¹⁶⁵ Italy is another example where a pro-American government led by Berlusconi supported the war, and more nationalistic policies coincided with more suspicion for the European integration process. This situation is part of an Italian policy towards the Middle East that is mainly based on the ruling government's preference to promote its relations either with the United States or with Europe.¹⁶⁶

Decision making processes in both the United States and the EU can also partly explain the reasons for transatlantic divergences over Iraq. In the United States there is a constitutional separation of power where the President and the Congress check and balance each other. Nevertheless, the 11 September attacks led to a large swing of the pendulum in favor of the Republican Presidency (George W. Bush), which had a Republican majority in the both branches of Congress from 2002-2006. Accordingly, the President gained overwhelming powers in foreign policy affairs at the expense of Congress in this period. Even within the presidency, the American foreign policy had been controlled by the Secretary of Defense and President Bush asserted that declaring war was in his authority. Therefore, an assertively militant American foreign policy was conducted from 2001-2006, of which Europeans were highly suspicious and which caused transatlantic tensions.¹⁶⁷ On the other hand, the “institutional constraints” in the European decision making process, particularly having a united CFSP or ESDP, pushed Europe to pursue civilian policies and national policies in security issues.¹⁶⁸

¹⁶⁴ Onat, “Tension and Cooperation in Transatlantic Relations,” 65.

¹⁶⁵ Stahl, “Understanding the 'Great Split' in Iraq Crisis,” 25.

¹⁶⁶ Del Sarto, “Italy's Politics Without Policy,” 136.

¹⁶⁷ Sergio Fabbrini and Daniela Sicurelli, “Bringing Policy-Making Structure Back In: Why Are the US and the EU pursuing Different Foreign Policies?,” *International Politics* 45, no. 3(2008): 300-302.

¹⁶⁸ *Ibid.*, 306.

- Constructivist Reasons for Transatlantic Divergences over the War:

Constructivist explanations depend on the assumption that historical values, beliefs, and cultures of states outline their behavior and consequently their policies. It is a well-known fact that one of the most intrinsic tools at the hands of European states to shape and consolidate their common identity is to take a stand vis-à-vis the United States, which generates transatlantic divergences apart from the subject itself. On the other hand, American exceptionalism, as a distinctive feature of the American identity, widens the gap between America and Europe.¹⁶⁹

Transatlantic divergences do not only emanate from the fact that both Europe and the United States embrace dissimilar values, but also from a progressive divergence in the interpretation of those values, particularly the value of multilateralism. Europe perceived that the United States abandoned multilateralism which challenged the core value of the European identity. Multilateralism has become a genuine cornerstone of the European identity, whereas American foreign policy considers multilateralism only an instrument and not a pillar of its identity. Consequently, the American defiance to this intrinsic European value reached its peak with the Iraq war which was launched under premises of preemption.¹⁷⁰ However, it is noticeable that the European tendency towards multilateralism in international relations is not united but rather revolves around three different European perspectives. The first is a German outlook that favors “all kinds of multilateralism” since the tools used in the Cold War can be used today with international security issues. The second is a French tendency to employ coercive force in addressing security threats, which is similar to the United States, but the French incentive for multilateralism is its refusal of a unilateral world led by the United States. The third is the British outlook that generally favors multilateralism but it is ready to utilize force when necessary. However, the British motivation for multilateralism differs fundamentally from the French and German, since the United Kingdom considers the United States the “indispensable power” without which the global community can not pursue a multilateral approach to world problems.¹⁷¹

In addition, transatlantic divergences attribute to Europe’s and America’s diverse outlook on the world, a fact that is highly marked in the speeches and rhetoric’s of European politicians

¹⁶⁹ Lieber, *the American Era: Power and Strategy*, 73-77.

¹⁷⁰ Sonia Lucarelli, “Values, Identity and Ideational Shocks in the Transatlantic Rift,” *Journal of International Relations and Development*, no.9 (2006): 306-326, doi:10.1057/palgrave.jird.1800095.

¹⁷¹ Roger E. Kanet, “A New US Approach to Europe? The Transatlantic Relationship after Bush,” *International Politics* 45, no.3 (2008): 356.

who affirm the European identity as a “normative power” against the American identity as a traditional power.¹⁷² These different European-American visions of the world are due to their different historical background. As the United States' experience in both World War II and the Cold War assured its material power, Europe's integration process after World War II assured the need for a civil society and “soft power” to achieve their goals.¹⁷³ This different historical experience also led to a different understanding of the concept of sovereignty. Where the United States still sticks to the notion of nation-state, Europe adheres to the concept of the post-modern state.¹⁷⁴ According to these differences in transatlantic strategic cultures, one can contend that the support of “New Europe” for the United States in the Iraq war was partly driven by “New Europe's” “strategic culture and identity” inclination towards the United States which was stronger than that of “Old Europe,” particularly in security issues.¹⁷⁵ Since these states owe a historical favor to the United States, which helped to take them out of the communist grip, they recognize the country as “a benign hegemon.”¹⁷⁶ On the other hand, the strategic culture of “Core Europe” was formed largely by the historical experience of “cooperative multilateralism” and post-modern notions of sovereignty.¹⁷⁷ Therefore, France's rejection to the American war in Iraq can not only be explained by realistic and liberal attributes, but should also be explained by the French national identity, which has been a long time in the making. Accordingly, France has a historical aspiration towards being a “great power,” and has always considered Europe as a global pillar. Therefore France rejected the American hegemonic role in the world:

In terms of French identity, France acted as a Great Power against a unilateral US, it acted on behalf of the majority of Europeans, it acted in the tradition of civilization and international law represented by the UN. The French... policy...was...thus a perfect expression of France's national identity.¹⁷⁸

The same applies to the German refusal to the war. Three cultural reasons were taken into consideration to justify the German opposition: “anti-Americanism, pacifism, and emancipation” and self assurance. As for the anti-Americanism rationale, many analysts attributed the German refusal to participate in the war to the worsening image of the United States in public opinion

¹⁷² Fabbrini, “Policy-Making Structure: the US and the EU,” 293.

¹⁷³ Forsberg, *Divided West*, 30.

¹⁷⁴ Lucarelli, “Values, Identity and Transatlantic Rift,” 314.

¹⁷⁵ Herd, “Constructive Transatlantic Strategic Dissonance,” 367.

¹⁷⁶ Forsberg, *Divided West*, 70.

¹⁷⁷ Herd, “Constructive Transatlantic Strategic Dissonance,” 367.

¹⁷⁸ Stahl, “Understanding the 'Great Split',” 28.

polls in Germany and increasing dislike of the United States. This resentment reached the extent of a comparison between Bush and Hitler by a German minister. However, this was in fact a hatred of the strategies of the Bush administration and not a hatred of the American people. Others explained the German refusal by the long-term German tradition of pacifism which means the German lack of enthusiasm to employ armed force and its eagerness to become a civilian power. Nevertheless, the most powerful explanation factor of the German behavior lies in its rising yearning for “emancipation.”¹⁷⁹ This emancipation meant a mounting perception of Germany as a “great power” and a rising opposition to unilateralist tendencies of the United States, particularly when it pertains to peace and war. Germany wanted to be “recognized, consulted, respected and taken seriously as a partner.”¹⁸⁰

In conclusion, neo-realistic reasons of the transatlantic divergence over the Iraq war in 2003 were divided into two levels; the US-EU level and the US-EU member states level. On the US-EU level, reasons revolved around the end of the Cold War, power discrepancies, September 11 and Bush doctrine, different threat perceptions, and bandwagoning or balancing strategies. On the US-EU member states level, reasons revolved around the differing national attitudes of the EU member state between Atlanticism and Europeanism and the soft balance of power whether against the United States or among the EU member states themselves. Neo-liberalist reasons of the transatlantic divergence over the Iraq war in 2003 revolved mainly around differing transatlantic values over international order, international institutions, tools of action, social and economic policies, and the domestic policies and decision making process in each side of the Atlantic. Constructivist reasons revolved around differing transatlantic historical values and experiences, particularly over multilateralism, the use of force, and over their different outlook to the globe at large.

¹⁷⁹ Forsberg, “German Foreign Policy,” 221-224.

¹⁸⁰ —, *Divided West*, 62-63.

▪ Transatlantic Rapprochement in the Post-War Phase: Reasons for Convergence

• Neo-Realist Reasons:

The American strategic failure in Iraq was the most important cause that pushed the American administration to reconcile with its European allies. This failure was not only due to the mismanagement of the post-war phase in Iraq, but also due to the rising insurgences, the rising casualties, the rising sectarianism, and the rising costs of the war. It coincided with a European reluctance to engage effectively in the post-war phase, particularly in the military operations. The economic and the military cost in Iraq demonstrated the limits of the American muscles.¹⁸¹ As a result, the American tendency to converge with its European allies was motivated not only by a desire to legitimate its position in Iraq, but also by a yearning for a European burden-sharing in Iraqi peace building efforts after the war.¹⁸²

The diminishing international legitimacy of the United States was another motivation for convergence with its European allies. In a sense, the security instability in Iraq coincided with a dwindling support of America's allies in the war. The discovery of the non-existence of WMD in Iraq undermined the legitimacy of the United States all over the world and affirmed the opinion that the Iraq war was a “war of choice” and not “of necessity.”¹⁸³ Even its allies in the war, particularly New Europe, started little by little to pull their troops out of Iraq under both financial constraints and public pressures.¹⁸⁴ The legitimacy of the United States' war on terrorism in order to secure freedom and liberty was further damaged because of its pursuits for regime changes in Iraq and Afghanistan, in which the United States also collaborated with autocratic and undemocratic states such as “Pakistan and Russia.”¹⁸⁵ The United States realized that it could not address the global challenges that range from “weapons of mass destruction, failing states, halting development alone and that there was no alternative but to cooperate with its European allies.”¹⁸⁶

On the other side of the Atlantic, Europeans were also motivated to converge, particularly with the states that opposed the war. A practical reason was that Europe would lose a lot if it did

¹⁸¹ Roger, “A New US Approach to Europe?,” 352.

¹⁸² Ingo, “Cooperation, Conflict in Transatlantic Relations,” 22.

¹⁸³ Forsberg, *Divided West*, 45.

¹⁸⁴ Roger, “A New US Approach to Europe?,” 354.

¹⁸⁵ Herd, “Constructive Transatlantic Strategic Dissonance,” 376.

¹⁸⁶ Mary Elise Sarotte, “The Worst Allies, Except for All the Others: US-European Relations in the Age of George W. Bush,” *International Politics* 45, no.3 (2008): 320.

not engage in forming a new Iraq regime after the war.¹⁸⁷ This explains the European convergence with the United States with respect of the international resolutions after the war concerning the costs to push the political process in Iraq forward. Besides, upheavals in Iraq would destabilize the “Middle East” and spread terrorism. Accordingly, it was an intrinsic European interest to assist the United States in stabilizing Iraq regardless of their differences over the war itself.¹⁸⁸ Hence, the American decision to attack Iraq caused a great transatlantic split, but the democratization of Iraq was a common transatlantic goal that caused a pragmatic convergence.¹⁸⁹ In addition, even though most European states diverged with the United States on many issues, at the same time they were aware of the fact that Washington's leadership in the world was “indispensable” to face the global challenges.¹⁹⁰

Another common threat to the transatlantic partners emerged and pushed both Europe and the United States to cooperate. It was the emergence of a new balancing or a “new shift in balance of power” in the favor of Asian powers such as China or India. This challenge was depicted as the “market-autocratic states' challenge” versus the “market-democratic model.”¹⁹¹ In other words, the rising powers in Asia combined with a defying Russia as autocratic states were considered a new challenge to the western and the transatlantic community. This challenge prompted Robert Kagan to argue that the balance of power among the nation states that characterized the Cold War era was back again; where “great powers” such as “Russia, China, Europe, Japan, India, Iran, and the United States” are fighting for regional and global dominance; and that “autocratic” regimes and “radical Islamists” are now in a struggle against the democratic world.¹⁹²

- Neo-Liberal Reasons:

The shared transatlantic values always come to the fore when the transatlantic partners pursue to converge, but it motivates both sides to mend their rifts on the grounds that their difference were about the tools, strategies and never about the goals, and that the transatlantic split over Iraq was on the way to address the challenge and not regarding the crux of their shared

¹⁸⁷ Spyer, “Europe and Iraq: Test Case,” 99.

¹⁸⁸ Martinez, “Iraq and Afghanistan: A Comparison,” 8.

¹⁸⁹ Steven, “The Security Council, Democratic Legitimacy,” 532.

¹⁹⁰ Rubin, “Building A New Atlantic Alliance,” 5.

¹⁹¹ Herd, “Constructive Transatlantic Strategic Dissonance,” 379.

¹⁹² Robert Kagan, *the Return of History and the End of Dreams* (London: Atlantic Books, 2008), 4-5.

values.¹⁹³ Another motivation for the American convergence with Europe was the rising U.S. budget and trade deficits which mainly resulted from launching two wars without Europe sharing some of the burden.¹⁹⁴ The Bush administration took over in 2001 with a surplus budget of over “\$200 billion” and by 2006 the surplus had turned into “a \$ 400 billion” deficit. Added to this, was an overwhelming decline in Bush's popularity, not only around the globe, but also within the United States. The decline of the domestic support for Bush's war in Iraq was a driving force to halt the administration's provocative policies towards its European allies and to start the second term by an endeavor to mend the rifts. This American reconciliation with Europe coincided with a personnel change in the administration personalities which took a turn from ideological towards pragmatic.¹⁹⁵ In 2006, the American administration was further constrained by the results of the mid-term Congressional elections, in which the Democrats gained control over the two legislative branches of Congress and put more financial and political stress on the Bush administration. A financial crisis was on the horizon as well.¹⁹⁶

On the European level, changes of governments turned out to be an effective factor. The leaders of Spain, Italy, and Britain paid the cost of supporting the war against Iraq. New leaders in Spain and Italy came to power with a European agenda and pulled out their troops out of Iraq; a new leader in Britain (Brawn) wanted to distance his foreign policy from that of the United States. In the same vein, the change in the major two European governments that opposed the war, France and Germany, resulted in two leaders, Sarkozy and Merkel, who were enthusiastic towards the Atlantic and an inevitable alliance with the United States. All these changes in governments in Europe and the changes in personnel in the second Bush administration paved the way for a more pragmatic transatlantic convergence.¹⁹⁷

In addition, the European integration project was subjected to setbacks, particularly in 2005 in the aftermath of the French and the Dutch refusal to ratify the European constitutional convention, which questioned the attractiveness model of the European Union. Another hurdle was that the enlarged EU would make it harder to find a common ground and common positions with respect to foreign policies.¹⁹⁸ Accordingly, hurdles on each side of the Atlantic pushed both

¹⁹³ Zaborowski, “Friends United? the Transatlantic Relations,” 222.

¹⁹⁴ Clark, “European Foreign Policy,” 288.

¹⁹⁵ Philip, “The End of the Bush Revolution,” 80-81

¹⁹⁶ Sergio, “Policy-Making Structure: the US and the EU,” 300.

¹⁹⁷ Rubin, “Building A New Atlantic Alliance,” 2.

¹⁹⁸ Nibleit, „Choosing Between America and Europe,” 631.

sides towards pragmatic convergence, particularly the Bush administration which faced the triple crises of Iraq, Katrina and a “crisis of confidence.”¹⁹⁹ With the election of Barack Obama and his inauguration in January of 2009, the foundations for more harmonious transatlantic relations were laid. The Europeans highly welcomed his plans to exit from Iraq as soon as possible, to join them in talking to Iran about nuclear issues, and to resuscitate the peace process in the Middle East.

Conclusion:

The unilateral and illegal Anglo-American invasion in Iraq in 2003 has caused two coinciding splits: one between the United States and some European states (Core Europe); the other among European states themselves whereby two Atlantic and Europeanist camps materialized with two opposing stands, one pro-American and the other anti-American. However, the Iraq crisis had three phases (pre-war phase, war phase, and post-war phase). The pre-war phase witnessed gradual and evolving tensions that were beneath the surface; the neoconservative agenda was the top priority of Bush's first term and the supremacy of an unrestrained United States in the globe was the primary goal. Transatlantic tensions started earlier, before the September 11 attacks, when the Bush administration showed a deliberate disdain towards international conventions and treaties. The September 11 attacks prompted, accelerated and even unleashed the American propensity towards unilateralism and the use of its military power to overthrow the Taliban regime in Afghanistan coincided with a vigorous desire and planning to change the Iraq regime preemptively.

The war phase started by depicting Iraq, at the beginning of 2002, as a member of the “axis of evil” that posed a grave threat to American national security and even to world security. The new American Security Strategy, released in September 2002, the so called Bush doctrine, manifested itself in a preemptive attack on Iraq to achieve regime change. This decision to attack Iraq divided the transatlantic alliance into two camps: an Atlantic camp composed of the UK, Spain, Portugal, Italy, Denmark, and the Netherlands, and most of the 'New Europe versus Europeanist' camp, composed mainly of Core Europe, i.e. Germany, France, and some non-aligned European states with the support of Russia. Although the Bush administration disdained international institutions, it resorted, under the pressure of its closest ally (Britain), to the United Nations in order to authorize the use of force against Iraq as a way to secure legitimacy and the

¹⁹⁹ Zaborowski, “Friends United? The Transatlantic Relations,” 223.

support of its allies. However, once it felt that the French and the Russian veto were on the table, the Bush administration in a coalition with Britain and the Atlantic camp decided to go-it-alone without a Security Council mandate and the invasion commenced in March 2003.

Following the toppling of the Iraqi regime a third phase (the post-war phase) started. Despite the American tendency immediately after the war to criticize those states that opposed the war, particularly France and Germany, there was European propensity, particularly a rhetoric and personal tendency, to mend the transatlantic fences over the war. However, transatlantic divergences were more obvious over the supposed role of the United Nations in building peace in Iraq and the appropriate way to reconstruct Iraq. This explained the reluctance of Core Europe to engage genuinely in the Iraqi reconstruction process. However, the deteriorating security situation in Iraq and the increase in casualties and insurgencies simultaneously with an American mismanagement in Iraq all put the American administration under pressure. Even more pressure was put on the shoulders of the American administration when most of its allies started to pull their troops out of Iraq and the United States had to bear most of the burden. This coincided with a deteriorating image of the Bush administration outside the world and inside the United States following the announcement that there were no WMD in Iraq and the discovery of the Americans abuses in Abu Ghareeb.

On the other hand, Europe faced many challenges and attempted to unify its European member states through a united European security vision in December 2003. Europe's integration project was subjected to a setback when France and the Netherlands refused to ratify the European constitution. In addition, most of the European states that had sent military troops to Iraq started to revise their situations for financial reasons and under public pressure. Government changes in Europe were also considerable. Changes of government in Italy and Spain led to an even greater European tendency to withdraw from Iraq. In France and Germany, changes of government led to a more pro-American attitude, whereas the changes in Britain led to more pragmatic relations.

In the aftermath of his reelection in 2004, Bush decided to converge with his European allies. A convergent and pragmatic transatlantic tone, language and policies came to the fore by the second term of the Bush administration, which coincided with changes in personnel in both the American administration and the European governments. Indicators of transatlantic convergences over Iraq were abundant. With reconciliatory visits to Europe, the Bush

administration started its way to heal the transatlantic rifts. In addition, the United States stopped its divide and rule policy with Europe, whereas European states calmed down their criticism of the United States' policies in Iraq. Both Europe and the United States pursued their efforts vigorously to reinforce the political transition process in Iraq, international conferences were held to support the democratization of Iraq.

The Bush's Republican administration was further constrained by the setbacks in 2006, when the Democrats won the majority of both legislative branches of Congress, when the budget deficit increased dangerously, when domestic support to the war in Iraq dropped in unprecedented ways, and when conflict in Iraq was shifted into a sectarian civil war. This explained the surge plan that the United States adopted in 2007 to rescue Iraq from drifting into a comprehensive civil war and to resuscitate the political process. However, the election of the President Barack Obama in late 2008 and his inauguration in January of 2009 witnessed a wave of optimism regarding transatlantic relations. Obama pledged to get out of Iraq as soon as he could, to enter a dialogue with Iran and to reactivate the peace process between Palestinians and Israelis.

The reasons for the transatlantic divergences and convergences over Iraq were multifaceted and ranged from neo-realist, neo-liberalist, to constructivist rationales. The neo-realist reasons for the transatlantic divergences over Iraq, particularly on the US-EU level, were mainly founded on the end of the Cold War, power discrepancies, September 11 and the Bush doctrine, different threat perceptions, different interests and foreign policy goals, and the swinging of the European between bandwagoning and balancing. The neo-realist reasons, on the US- EU member states level, revolved around the fact that Europe was divided into Five Europes. The chapter dwelled only on explaining the neo-realist rationales behind the positions of Atlantic Europe, Core Europe and New Europe. As for Atlantic Europe, particularly the UK, its support of the United States was nothing but a reinforcement of the stable and long term British foreign policy goal to balance France's long held aspirations to autonomously take the helm in Europe and a fear that France may align with Germany to challenge Britain's role in Europe. In addition, keeping close and innate relations with the United States will definitely reinforce the British status and its actions on the globe. Italy's support of the United States can be explained with an Italian long term desire to achieve equilibrium between Atlanticism and Europeanism. During the war, Italy moved the pendulum towards the United States as a technique to reinforce its

status within the European Union, particularly vis-à-vis France and Germany. Spain, led by Aznar's government, surprisingly supported the United States despite the overwhelming public reluctance towards the war. It has been argued that the United States pledged to help Spain in fighting ETA.

Core Europe's rejection of the war can be explained by the Franco-German desire to have a say in the international arena. Both states recognized that the United States, under the Bush administration, espoused unilateral, hegemonic, and non consultative tendencies towards its allies, particularly in the thorny issues of war and peace like the Iraqi case. As for New Europe, most of these states supported the United States because they shared security concerns and believed that the United States and NATO were the genuine guarantee for their own security which is highly threatened by Russia. In addition, these countries shared the view of Italy, Spain and Denmark that they should have a say in Europe and therefore they should stand against the French-German leadership, which might come at the expense of their interests as small states within the European Union. In addition, there was a desire to gain economic and political status after the war from the United States, particularly in Poland.

Neo-liberalist reasons for transatlantic divergences over the war encompassed three factors: firstly a multi-leveled value gap between the United States and Europe, secondly domestic politics in both the United States and Europe, and thirdly was different decision making processes in both the United States and in the EU. The first factor is a multi-leveled value gap between the United States and Europe that started at the beginnings of the 1990s, and definitely led to a larger divergence over material interests and threat perceptions. This transatlantic value gap included a broad series of areas such as international affairs, international institutions such as NATO and the UN, and the tools required to face threats. The value gap embraced also a divergence over social and economic policies, particularly over the appropriate role of the state, and a divergence over questions of faith and morality. These transatlantic divergences over values can partly explain why France and Germany refused to support the United States. And even the states that supported the United States in the war, with the exception of the UK, were not convinced of the war and were not adopting the values of the United States; rather, they supported it rhetorically to preserve their long friendship. Even Britain, which has more willingness to use military force, preferred multilateralism and the legal back up of the UN.

The second factor is the domestic politics in both the United States and Europe. In the United States, a combination of the September 11 attacks and a neoconservative administration led by George W. Bush led to a radical change in American foreign policy. This change was marked in a New American Security Strategy in 2002, which adopted unilateralism, preemption, regime change, and a disdain for international institutions. These concepts became known as the Bush doctrine which made regime change a top priority. On the other hand, Europe is a divided continent, particularly when it comes to security issues. There is no one voice for Europe but rather the voices of the national member states, particularly when it comes to the Middle East. The German rejection resulted partly from domestic public rejection to the war and Iraq became the striking electoral card in Schröder's electoral campaign. As for France, the Presidential elections were imminent and the French public overwhelmingly rejected the war in Iraq, not to mention the large portion of the French Muslims in France. Spain and Italy are other examples of the effect of domestic politics on the transatlantic relations. The Spanish conservative government gambled and supported the United States in the war and even sent troops. However, this choice was quickly corrected by a new socialist government led by Jose Luis Zapatero, which pulled out the Spanish troops from Iraq as soon as it was elected. Italy is another example where a pro-American government led by Berlusconi supported the war, and preferred more nationalistic policies that coincided with a more suspicion of the European integration process.

The third factor is the different decision making processes in both the United States and the EU. From 2001 until 2006, the President of the United States gained overwhelming powers in foreign affairs at the cost of Congress. Within the presidency, American foreign policy was hijacked by the Secretary of Defense and President Bush asserted that declaring war is his authority. Therefore, an assertive militant American foreign policy was conducted from 2001-2006, which was refused by the European member states and caused transatlantic tensions. On the other hand, the institutional constraints in Europe's decision making process, particularly in having a disunited CFSP or ESDP, pushed Europe to pursue civilian policies. National European policies became dominant in security issues, which explained the emergence of the different transatlantic and Europeanist camps in Europe.

Constructivist reasons for the transatlantic divergences over the war revolved around the fact that historical values, beliefs, and cultures outline the behavior of states and consequently their policies. Transatlantic divergences do not only emanate from the fact that both Europe and

the United States embrace dissimilar values, but also from a progressively growing divergence over the interpretation of the same values, particularly the value of multilateralism. Europe perceived that the United States rejected multilateralism which in turn challenged the core value of European identity. Multilateralism has become a genuine cornerstone of the European identity, but was only considered an instrument of the American foreign policy and not a pillar of its identity. Consequently, the American defiance to this intrinsic European value reached its climax with the Iraq war which was launched as a preemptive strike. According to this approach, the support of New Europe for the United States in the Iraq war was partly driven by its strategic culture and identity inclination towards the United States. On the other hand, France's rejection of the war was partly a result of the French national identity. France has a historical aspiration towards being a great power, and has always considered Europe as a global power therefore, it refused the American hegemony. The German behavior lied in its yearning for emancipation. This emancipation meant a mounting perception of Germany as a great power and a rising opposition to the unilateralist tendency of the United States, particularly when it pertains to war and peace. Germany wanted to be recognized, consulted, respected and taken seriously as a partner.

There are two neo-realist and neo-liberal reasons for the transatlantic convergences in the post-war phase. The neo-realist rationales revolved around the American strategic failure in Iraq, the evolving economic problems in the United States, the military costs in Iraq, and the diminishing international legitimacy of the United States. Europe converged because it would have lost much if it had not engaged in forming a new Iraq regime after the war. In addition, the upheavals in Iraq meant a destabilization of the Middle East and the spread of terrorism which is a direct threat to Europe. Furthermore, the emergence of a new balance or a shift in the balance of power in favor of Asian nations such as China or India pushed both Europe and the United States to pragmatically converge.

The neo-liberalist reasons for transatlantic convergences revolved around common values and domestic factors on both sides. As for the values, the transatlantic allies used their common values as reinforcement for their solidarity; their differences have never been about the goals, but only about the tools. As for domestic factors, the American administration suffered from budget and trade deficits, a decline of the domestic support for Bush's war in Iraq, and most importantly the loss of control over the two legislative branches of Congress. In Europe, the changes in

government in Germany, France, Italy, Spain, and Britain coincided with personnel changes in the second Bush administration, which paved the way for a more pragmatic transatlantic convergence.

Chapter Four:

Soft Divergence Followed By a Solid Convergence:

Transatlantic Policies and the Iranian Nuclear Dilemma

“The [transatlantic differences] still remain...yet officials on both sides of the Atlantic believe it will not hinder practical cooperation.”

“The US approach to solving Iran's nuclear problem, illustrates [an] overall softening of the U.S. strategy. If [in 2003] Iran would have been a clear case for the differences in approaches between EU and U.S. (hard versus soft), by the middle of 2006 it is no longer valid.”¹

¹ Anna I. Zakharchenko, “The EU and U.S. Strategies against Terrorism and Proliferation of WMD: A Comparative Study” (Occasional paper Series, George C. Marshall European Center for Security Studies, Germany, no.6, January 2007), 35.

▪ Introduction:

Undoubtedly, a nuclear Iran is a common, direct, and imminent menace to both Europe and the United States. Nevertheless, both Europe and the United States have always diverged over the best tools and tactics to address the Iranian nuclear quandary. However, both Europe and the United States have remarkably converged and diverged with respect of the Iranian nuclear program since it was officially revealed in 2002. The chapter argues that transatlantic relations have witnessed two phases of divergence and convergence. The first phase (2002-2005) witnessed a state of divergent approaches and tactics between Europe and the United States, whereas their main common goal, preventing Iran from becoming a nuclear state, has never been called into question. The second phase (2005-2009) witnessed a pragmatic transatlantic convergence, albeit with bargaining and compromises until the end of George W. Bush's second term in 2008. With the election of Barack Obama in late 2008 and his inauguration in January 2009 a more pragmatic and even principled transatlantic convergence over Iran materialized.

Firstly, the chapter envisages a brief historical look at the transatlantic policies regarding Iran as a prelude to the Iranian nuclear crisis which erupted in 2002. Secondly, it goes deeper into the first phase (2002-2005) by initially exemplifying the rationales behind the transatlantic convergent aim which was and still is preventing an Iranian nuclear program. Next, the chapter gives more details about the divergent approaches embraced by both the first Bush administration and the European Union with regard to the non-proliferation strategies in general and the Iranian case in particular. Subsequently, the chapter goes deeper into the details of the European actions, such as the EU3 initiative, based on its engagement strategy, and the American unilateralist and militarist approach, based on its isolation and regime change strategy.

Thirdly, the chapter envisages the second phase (2005-2009) by showing that the Americans turned to be softer and the Europeans got much harder, which has consequently led to a transatlantic pragmatic convergence with regard to Iran during Bush's second term. Next, the chapter argues that the Iranian nuclear crisis prompted the global powers to battle each other at the Security Council starting from 2006. From 2006 until 2008, the United States and Europe were in the same boat fighting at the Security Council for more sanctions against a more defiant Iran, whereas China and Russia reluctantly abstained from imposing any harsh sanctions on Tehran. Afterwards, Obama's revolutionary initiative to conduct direct and unconditional talks

with Tehran, unlike his predecessor, was highly received in Europe. With Obama's new foreign policy a more pragmatic and even principled transatlantic convergence came to the forefront.

Fourthly, the chapter modestly attempts to answer why transatlantic politics have witnessed these stages of divergence and convergence with respect to the Iranian nuclear program. The answers rely heavily on the premises of the neo-realist, neo-liberalist and constructivist theories. Precisely, neo-realistic, neo-liberalist, and constructivist reasons for transatlantic divergences over Iran (2002-2005) will be envisaged separately. Next, neo-realist and neo-liberalist explanations for transatlantic convergences over Iran (2005-2009) will be scrutinized. Finally, a conclusion endeavors to answer the wide-ranging inquiry why transatlantic allies diverged and then converged over the Iranian crisis.

▪ **Transatlantic Policies Vis-a-Vis Iran: A Historical Look**

A brief glance at the transatlantic policies towards Iran before and after the Islamic revolution in 1979 is unquestionably a prerequisite to fully grasp transatlantic approaches towards the Iranian nuclear issue which came to the forefront at the end of 2002. Certainly, Iran was a crucial regional player on behalf of the United States and the European member states during the Cold War to resist the spread of communism in the Middle East. This explains the excellent relationship between Mohamed Rezza Pahlavi (the Shah) and the United States until he was being overthrown in the wake of the Islamic revolution in 1979.² Prior to the revolution, the United States overwhelmingly supported and reinforced the rule of the Shah in Iran to the extent that it had been the master-mind in toppling the nationalist Prime Minister, Mohamed Mossadeq, in 1953, who was against western interests in Iran. As a matter of fact, Iran under the rule of Shah was known as the regional 'gendarme' who guarded and defended western interests in the Middle East.³ The same applied to the European countries' relations with Iran, particularly with respect to economic ties. European economic relations with Iran before the outbreak of the Islamic revolution were outstanding, particularly with Britain, France and Italy.⁴

The Iranian Islamic revolution in 1979 constituted a defining moment for both the United States' and Europe's relations with Iran. Since that time, Iran was regarded as a "troublesome"

² George Tzogopoulos, "The Evolution of US and EU Foreign Policy towards Iran with Emphasis on the Period after 11 September 2001" (Nice, Institut European Des Hautes Etudes Internationales, Mai 2004), 8, <http://www.iehei.org/bibliotheque/TZOGOPOULOS.pdf>.

³ Enayatollah Yazdani and Rizwan Hussain, "United States' Policy towards Iran after the Islamic Revolution: An Iranian Perspective," *International Studies* 43, no. 3 (2006): 268.

⁴ Tzogopoulos, "Evolution of US and EU Policy towards Iran," 14.

and antagonistic state in respect to American and European interests in the Middle East. The Shah was exiled and a novel “theocratic” regime materialized with a declared mission to fight and resist Western powers which were portrayed as the “infidel West.”⁵ The worsening relations with the United States were further exacerbated by the “Iran hostage crisis” which started on November 4, 1979. Iranian students held power over the American Embassy in Tehran with the blessing of the new revolutionary Iranian regime for “444 days”. The hostage crisis profoundly outraged the United States and prompted it to penalize Iran economically and diplomatically. In April 1980, the United States brought its energy imports with Iran to an end, froze Iranian assets, and cut off bilateral travels between the United States and Iran.⁶ At the same vein, European countries punished Iran by initiating a “limited economic embargo” and ended armed cooperation with Tehran. A major source of European anxiety was that the new revolutionarily Islamic regime tracked its antagonists and exterminated them in Europe.⁷

The Iraq-Iran war came to the vanguard in 1980, and the transatlantic allies aligned themselves with Iraq in order to restrain the Iranian project of exporting its revolutionarily ideas in the region.⁸ Until the end of the decade, transatlantic policies towards Iran were consistently convergent. Washington listed Iran as a terrorist state in its ‘State Department’ Report in 1984. It even accused Tehran of being a stumbling block in the “Middle East Peace Process,” as well as of pursuing to possess WMD, and of breaching “human rights” principles.⁹ On the European level, terrorist attacks, sponsored by Iran, took place on the European continent. Also, the Salman Rushdie issue, where the Iranian regime accused the author of blasphemy, led to political outrage in Europe that prohibited any kind of “normalization” with Tehran.¹⁰

Furthermore, the end of the Soviet Union, the emergence of the United States as the sole global power, and the manifestation of European Union as a key pillar in international affairs had its consequences on the transatlantic policies in respect to Iran. Both the United States and

⁵ Kenneth M. Pollack, “A Common Approach to Iran,” in: *the Crescent of Crisis: U.S. - European Strategy for the Greater Middle East*, eds. Ivo Daalder, et.al.(Washington, D.C: Brookings Institution Press, 2006), 8.

⁶ Aylin Unver Noi, “Iran’s Nuclear Programme: the EU Approach to Iran in Comparison to the US’ Approach,” *Perceptions* (Spring 2005), 80, [http://www. Sam.gov.tr/perceptions/ volume 10/spring 2005.html](http://www.Sam.gov.tr/perceptions/ volume 10/spring 2005.html).

⁷ Tzogopoulos, “Evolution of US and EU Policy towards Iran,” 15.

⁸ Pollack, “A Common Approach to Iran,”13.

⁹ Tzogopoulos, “Evolution of US and EU Policy towards Iran,”18.

¹⁰ Bruno Tertrais, “The Iranian Nuclear Crisis,” in: *the Crescent of Crisis: U.S. - European Strategy for the Greater Middle East*, eds. Ivo Daalder, et.al. (Washington, D.C: Brookings Institution Press, 2006), 30.

European Union were totally convergent on the concerns and threats emanating from Iran. The four transatlantic threats and concerns over Iran were “terrorism, the Middle East peace process, WMD, and human rights”. Nevertheless, Europe and the United States diverged over the most appropriate tools to address these threats. The United States opted for isolating Iran through “economic pressure and sanctions,” whereas the European Union chose “political dialogue” as a device to change the behavior of the Iranian regime. The United States considered Iran a rogue state and its behavior consistent with its political regime that ought to be isolated, rebuked, and punished for bad behavior. The European Union, on the other hand, rebuffed the American approach and came to a conclusion that sanctions and isolation do nothing but tighten the grip of the radicals at the expense of the reformists in the domestic Iranian context. Unlike the United States, the EU did not perceive Iran as a ‘rogue state’ but rather as an indispensable regional force of stabilization.¹¹

Even though Europe and the United States converged over the common threats emanating from Iran, they diverged over the appropriate approach to address these Iranian threats. This explains the fact that the beginnings of the 1990s witnessed different European and American policies towards Iran. The European Union, particularly the big member states such as Germany, France and Italy, pursued an engagement policy towards Iran; based mainly on economic ties. In 1992, it turned into an official European policy known as “critical dialogue,” and Germany became the “initiator of this dialogue.”¹² The rationales behind this European strategy were the growing bilateral economic gains and Europe’s pressing need for energy resources from Tehran, particularly in France, Germany and Italy.¹³ In addition, Europe thought that trade and close economic ties with Iran would push the Iranian regime to compromise and to even alter its behavior on human rights and terrorism.¹⁴

Conversely, the United States continued its isolation and sanctions policy against Iran and even listed it on the top list of the rogue states that constitute a challenge to U.S. hegemony. The United States harbored the same concerns over Iran as Europe, WMD, terrorism, the Middle East peace process and the abuse of human rights as the corner stone in its policies against the

¹¹ Tzogopoulos, “Evolution of US and EU Policy towards Iran,” 23-24.

¹² Noi, “Iran’s Nuclear Programme,” 85-86.

¹³ Tzogopoulos, “Evolution of US and EU Policy towards Iran,” 21-22.

¹⁴ Tertrais, “The Iranian Nuclear Crisis,” 30.

Iranian regime.¹⁵ This explains the “dual containment” policy that the United States adopted in 1993, under the Clinton administration, vis-à-vis both Iran and Iraq. Since both regimes were perceived as antagonistic to the United States' policies in the Middle East, the ultimate aim of this policy was not to alter the behavior of these regimes but rather to weaken them in the hope for regime change later on.¹⁶ Under this containment policy, further sanctions against Iran were implemented by the United States in 1995, which included an inclusive “trade and investment” ban. In 1996, the American Congress enacted the “Iran-Libya Sanction Act” in order to punish any company that spends “more than \$ 40 million per year” in the Iranian or Libyan oil sector.¹⁷ Those American sanctions against Iran were not welcomed by European member states and they even refused to follow them because the sanctions were against European economic interests.¹⁸ Transatlantic tensions went high at this point, and the ‘European Commission’ raised a protest against the American law before the ‘World Trade Organization’. However, a European American consensus was attained in April 1997, when Europe dropped its case against the United States in the WTO and the United States promised Europeans not to harm their companies working in Iran.¹⁹

However, deterioration in the European-Iranian relations came to the forefront in 1997 when Iran was convicted after 5 years of trial by a German Court, known as the “Mykonos Case,” of committing terrorist acts on German territory. The European response to the Iranian crime was decisive in the way that all European member states collectively decided to cut off diplomatic ties with Tehran and to halt their “critical dialogue” course of action.²⁰

When the reformist presidential candidate Muhammad Khatami came to power in Iran in 1997, with a “rapprochement agenda” vis-à-vis the West in general and the United States in particular, both the United States and Europe acted positively but not to the same degree. The United States sent some signs that further “rapprochement” was possible, whereas the European Union started to put its policies with Iran on a normal footing.²¹ The European Union dropped its former critical dialogue policy and started a “comprehensive dialogue” in 1998, which encompassed half-yearly gathering at high diplomatic levels and was further followed by

¹⁵ Yazdani, “United States' Policy towards Iran,” 276.

¹⁶ Noi, “Iran's Nuclear Programme,” 81.

¹⁷ Tzogopoulos, “Evolution of US and EU Policy towards Iran,” 20.

¹⁸ Noi, “Iran's Nuclear Programme,” 81.

¹⁹ Tzogopoulos, “Evolution of US and EU Policy towards Iran,” 24.

²⁰ Noi, “Iran's Nuclear Programme,” 87.

²¹ Pollack, “A Common Approach to Iran,” 15.

bilateral visits by the leaders of many European governments and President Khatami.²² The United States' gestures of rapprochement comprised alleviating the United States control on "food and medical" imports to Iran, showing sympathy and sending aid when an earthquake struck Iran in.²³ Nonetheless, the radical camp emerged again in Iran between 1999 and 2001 and tightened its grip on the all the Iranian institutions but the Presidency, which practically restrained and chained the moderate camp led by Khatami. By 2001, the revolutionarily extremists again controlled the political scene in Iran and transatlantic policies increasingly diverged. Whereas the United States stepped back to the long-last policy of isolation and sanctions against Iran, Europe continued its comprehensive dialogue as a tool to strengthen the reformists within Iran.²⁴ On February 7, 2001, the European Union took a further step to strengthen its relations with Iran by endorsing negotiations with Iran to strike a "Trade and Cooperation Agreement."²⁵ In December 2002, negotiations started in order to create a comprehensive European Iranian trading accord.²⁶ On the American side, George W. Bush came to power and tried to remove his foreign policy from his predecessor who had not taken any steps regarding the thorny issues with Iran. Iran was perceived in the same "zero square" concerning its support of "terrorism," its defiance of the "Middle East peace process," its violation of "human rights," and, most importantly, its pursuit of "WMD."²⁷

In the wake of September 11, 2001, a revolutionary American foreign policy came to the vanguard and the United States unleashed its worldwide war against terrorism.²⁸ In its first two years, the Bush administration addressed Iran in the context of the US wars against Afghanistan and Iraq. The administration pursued policies of "containment and limited engagement" with Iran. In the context of the American war against the 'Taliban' in 2001, American-Iranian relations were improving on the ground that both countries had a common interest to oust the Afghani regime.²⁹ As a result, the US and Iran conveyed to talk about and coordinate the

²² Tzogopoulos, "Evolution of US and EU Policy towards Iran," 25.

²³ Yazdani, "United States' Policy towards Iran," 276.

²⁴ Pollack, "A Common Approach to Iran," 15.

²⁵ Tzogopoulos, "Evolution of US and EU Policy towards Iran," 25.

²⁶ Tertrais, "The Iranian Nuclear Crisis," 30-31.

²⁷ Marcin Zaborowski, "Bush's Legacy and American's Next Foreign Policy" (Chaillot paper no.111, Institute for Security Studies, European Union, Paris, September 2008), 62-63.

²⁸ Tzogopoulos, "Evolution of US and EU Policy towards Iran," 27.

²⁹ Charles K. Hyde, "Iran: the Case for Democratic Containment" (Strategy Research Project, 18 March 2005), 3, <http://www.dtic.mil/cgi-bin/GetTRDoc?Location=U2&doc=GetTRDoc.pdf>.

'Afghani operation' in an assembly identified as the 'Geneva Contact Group.' Such cooperation was effective in Afghanistan and turned to talk about other matters, especially about Iraq.³⁰

Nonetheless, in the beginning of 2002 the mood of American Iranian relations overwhelmingly declined. Iran was charged of smuggling weapons to the Palestinian territories after Israel captured the *Karine A*. Besides, Iran was accused of harboring figures of the Taliban regime that fled from Afghanistan. However, the foremost bone of contention was the signs that Iran was vigorously pursuing a 'nuclear' program. After less than one month of finding out about the *Karine A*, a controversial statement during President Bush's State of the Union address listed Iran on the axis of evil, together with Iraq and North Korea.³¹ At this point, a new phase of transatlantic divergences over the appropriate response to address the Iranian nuclear program rapidly emerged.

▪ **Phase One: Transatlantic Convergent Interests and Divergent Approaches (2002-2005).**

American and European interests to thwart Iran from acquiring a nuclear bomb are identical. A nuclear Iran is unacceptable for both Europe and the United States because it represents a strategic threat to their interests for several reasons. Briefly, three major motives can be observed: Firstly, an Iranian nuclear weapon would certainly open a wide gate for a "nuclear arms race in the Middle East". The other regional powers such as 'Egypt and Saudi- Arabia' and even 'Turkey,' under a sense of threat and a yearning to deter the Iranian power, will pursue nuclear capabilities, secretly or explicitly.³² If these states became aware of the possibility that Iran would only have to endure a mild punishment, they might think that the same would be applied to them.³³ Consequently, the Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT) would not be only undermined but would collapse and other regional powers in different parts of the world will follow suit, which would mean a rampant increase of nuclear states in the world.³⁴

Secondly, a nuclear Iran combined with an animosity towards the West in general and towards the United States in particular, would connote the materialization of Iran as an aggressive and belligerent "regional" player in the Middle East with the endeavor to upset

³⁰ Zaborowski, "Bush's Legacy and American's Policy," 64- 65.

³¹ Ibid., 65-66.

³² Anthony Seaboyer and Oliver Thranert, "The EU-3 and the Iranian Nuclear Program," in: *Transatlantic Discord: Combating Terrorism and Proliferation, Preventing Crises*, eds. Franz Eder, et.al. (Baden-Baden: Nomos, 2007), 99.

³³ Pollack, "A Common Approach to Iran," 11.

³⁴ Seaboyer, "EU-3 and the Iranian Nuclear Program," 11.

Western interests.³⁵ In other words, the Iranian regime would be empowered and would act to dominate the ‘Straits of Hormuz’ and the ‘Persian Gulf’ area. This would mean a direct threat to the flow of energy resources to the West. In addition, Iran would act aggressively towards its neighbors, which would mean a more destabilized and possibly nuclear Middle East. Thirdly, a nuclear Iran is a genuine existential menace to Israel. Iran refuses to recognize Israel and pursues a hostile rhetoric against it. If these facts were combined with an Iranian nuclear capability, Iran would be tempted to pressure Israel and might even become a nuclear umbrella for ‘Syria’ and its proxy agents such as ‘Hezbollah’ and Hamas. In addition, this would further complicate the Israeli-Palestinian conflict by pledging more support to the radicals in Palestine without fear of retaliation. Therefore, the transatlantic states highly converged over the ultimate aim, which was to prevent Iran from acquiring a nuclear weapon. Nevertheless, they highly diverged over the best approach to attain such aim.³⁶

Prior to the materialization of the Iranian nuclear crisis in August 2002, transatlantic divergences over the proper approach to counter the non-proliferation phenomenon were evident. The Bush administration remarkably underestimated the effectiveness of universal accords such as the ‘NPT (Non-Proliferation Treaty),’ the ‘CTBT’ or the validity of worldwide organizations like the ‘IAEA(International Atomic Energy Agency)’ and the ‘UN(The United Nations)’ to thwart “rogue states” on the “axis of evil” (Iraq, Iran, and North Korea) from pursuing WMD. In other words, from the Bush administration’s perspective, these institutions and accords do nothing but provide a façade and a cover for rogue states to continue their pursuit of nuclear weapons without penalty. Accordingly, the sole suitable and practicable solution is to pressure and even change these regimes and pave the way for new ones. On the other side of the fence, European states strongly believed that “international treaties, institutions and diplomacy” do highly matter in countering proliferation. Unlike the United States' dichotomy of “good” and “bad” states, Europe believed that the deviation of the states' behavior necessitates “international consensus” and cooperative “diplomacy” in order to bring them back on the right track.³⁷

Furthermore, the Bush administration underestimated the reformist camp in Iran and contented that a “regime change” started in Iraq and then Iran would be the best strategy to

³⁵ Colin Dueck and Ray Takeyh, “Iran's Nuclear Challenge,” *Political Science Quarterly* 122, no.2 (2007):189.

³⁶ Tertrais, “The Iranian Nuclear Crisis,” 29.

³⁷ George Perkovich, “Towards Transatlantic Cooperation in Meeting the Iranian Nuclear Challenge” (Proliferation papers, Security Studies Department, in collaboration with the Atomic Energy Commission, Winter 2005), 5.

stabilize the Middle East. The European states rejected Bush's 'axis of evil' speech of January 29, 2002. As for the Iranian case, from the European perspective, "dialogue" and communication would increase the assets of the reformist camp, debilitate the extremists, and even pave the way for Iran to be a good and responsible player in the Middle East.³⁸ On a strategic level, transatlantic divergences became wider and clearer when the United States declared its new National Security Strategy in September 2002. That strategy was an outline of the United States' policies in the wake of the terrorist attacks in September 2001. "Preemption, use of force, regime change, and unilateralism" were the cornerstones of this strategy. Many analysts assured that this was the preparation to invade Iraq as a first step and Iran as the second.³⁹ A separate American 'Strategy to Combat Weapons of Mass Destruction' was released in December 2002. That strategy assigned the job to fight proliferation to the "American military forces," and assured the vitality of preemption and unilateral actions.⁴⁰ This American approach was rejected by the European Union, which later on managed to formulate a common approach in its 'European Security Strategy' and its 'European Strategy for Combating Proliferation of WMD.' Both strategic documents were simultaneously released on December 12, 2003. The nucleus of the European strategy to counter proliferation was 'effective multilateralism' as the proper way to stabilize the globe.⁴¹

Against this backdrop, the Iranian nuclear crisis erupted in August 2002, when an "Iranian opposition group" revealed that Iran was concealing two clandestine "nuclear facilities" and secret "Uranium-enrichment activities in Natanz city". In February 2003, the IAEA paid an "investigation" visit to Iran and announced in June 2003 that Iran had a covert program for "fissile material production" and had not informed the IAEA about it for "more than 18 years," which constituted a clear breach of the NPT.⁴² In the same month, the United States opted for the United Nations Security Council to address the Iranian nuclear program in order to pave the way for imposing sanctions and or even striking a military attack against Iran.⁴³

³⁸ Daniel Brumberg, "Dilemmas of Western Policies towards Iran," *International Spectator*, no. 3(2002), 71, <http://www.iai.it/pdf/articles/brumberg.pdf>.

³⁹ James Steinberg, "Preventive Force in US National Security Strategy," *Survival* 47, no. 4 (2005-2006): 55.

⁴⁰ Matthias Dembinski, "Transatlantic Cooperation or Discord: the United States, the European Union and Nuclear Non-Proliferation," in: *Transatlantic Discord: Combating Terrorism and Proliferation, Preventing Crises*, eds. Franz Eder, et.al. (Baden-Baden: Nomos, 2007), 43-46.

⁴¹ Ibid., 47.

⁴² Robert J. Einhorn, "A Transatlantic Strategy on Iran's Nuclear Program," *The Washington Quarterly*, (2004), 22, http://www.twq.com/04autumn/docs/04autumn_einhorn.pdf.

⁴³ Tzogopoulos, "Evolution of US and EU Policy towards Iran," 34.

Timing was crucial in this regard, since the United States was at its acme of power after toppling both the Taliban regime in Afghanistan in 2001 and the Iraqi regime in April 2003. The buzzword in the American administration at this time was “who is next?,” which was an explicit reference to Iran. In the aftermath of the American invasion of Iraq, in May 2003, Iran proposed, throughout the ‘Swiss’ government, a full-fledged “normalization” proposal to the United States. The proposal was known as the “grand bargain” where Iran would trade its policies of “proliferation, terrorism, Iraq and the Palestinian-Israeli conflict” for American security guarantees and normalization of its relations with Tehran. In June 2003, the American response was a harsh refusal; the US even cut off the links with Tehran over Afghanistan. Instead, it increased its hostile rhetoric against the Iranian regime and denounced the Swiss government for exceeding its limits as a “representative of the American interests in Iran.”⁴⁴ Examples for the American antagonistic rhetoric against Iran can also be found in the refusal of the ‘White House Spokesman,’ on June 19, 2003, to abandon a military strike as to address the nuclear threat. Furthermore, in July 2003, George W. Bush explicitly included the military attack as an alternative to deal with Iran's nuclear threat, when he stated that “all options” were “on the table” with regards to Iran.⁴⁵ Thus, the American administration evidently adopted a “regime change” approach and there was an overwhelming American desire to submit the Iranian nuclear file to the UN Security Council.

On the European side, transatlantic divisions and even European divisions about Iraq were still in the European countries' minds. Following the revelation of the Iranian clandestine nuclear program in August 2002 and the report of the IAEA in June 2003, European fears materialized not only of an Iranian nuclear threat but also of an “escalation” of the crisis similar to that of Iraq in March 2003. Impetuously, the three major European countries, France, Britain and Germany decided to “engage diplomatically” as a way to evade one more disagreement on the appropriate tools to face Iran's nuclear program.⁴⁶ On October 21, 2003, the “ministers of foreign affairs of France, the UK and Germany” accepted an Iranian invitation and headed directly to negotiate with Iran. An accord was struck between EU3 and Iran in which Iran agreed

⁴⁴ Robert S. Litwak, “Living with Ambiguity: Nuclear Deals with Iran and North Korea,” *Survival* 50, no.1 (2008): 91-118.

⁴⁵ Tzogopoulos, “Evolution of US and EU Policy towards Iran,” 38.

⁴⁶ Seaboyer, “EU-3 and the Iranian Nuclear Program,” 100-101.

to halt its enrichment program and to sign the “Additional Protocol” of the IAEA, which puts more constraints and scrutiny on the states' nuclear activities.⁴⁷

In response, the three European countries pledged to prevent any attempt to submit the Iranian file to the Security Council, as the United States had urged. In addition, the E 3 admitted the “natural right” of Iran to peacefully utilize “nuclear energy” in line with the ‘NPT’. Furthermore, they acknowledged and even pledged to allow Iran to have “access to modern technology” once it fully collaborated with the IAEA and once anxiety about its nuclear program was over. This accord was known as ‘Tehran agreement’ of October 30, 2003.⁴⁸ The European-Iranian accord was in contradiction to the American stance. The United States was eager to remove the case from the hands of the IAEA and to put it instead in the grasp of the ‘Security Council’ so as to impose further sanctions, in consistency with its isolation policy against Iran. Cynicism was the landmark of the American administration towards the agreement, because it thought that European states were “conciliatory,” rewarding the bad behavior of Iran, and that there was no “stick” in the deal such as possible “sanctions” if Iran violated its obligations. As a matter of fact, the United States considered Iran's negotiation with Europe as a tactic to escape from punishment. This posture enlightened the preference of the United States not to engage in the negotiations that the European states initiated.⁴⁹

Nevertheless, European states pressured the IAEA not to proclaim that Iran is in “non compliance” with the NPT, which logically meant referring the file to the Security Council. The European pressure succeeded: the IAEA resolution of November 26, 2003, denounced Iran for not informing the IAEA about its nuclear activities, but abstained to depict Iran as “in non compliance”. In December 2003, a new momentum was given to the negotiation when Javier Solana, the HR-CFSP (High Representative of Common Foreign and Security Policy), joined the European players in the negotiation process with Iran.⁵⁰ In February 2004, European suspicions came to the vanguard when the IAEA report confirmed that Iran concealed “designs for P-2 centrifuges” and conducted tests “with polonium-210”. In March 2004, the IAEA accused Iran of

⁴⁷ Tom Sauer, “Coercive Diplomacy by the EU: the Iranian Nuclear Weapons Crisis,” *Third World Quarterly* 28, no. 3 (2007): 618.

⁴⁸ Sara Kutchesfahani, “Iran's Nuclear Challenge and European Diplomacy” (EPC issue paper no. 46, European Policy Centre, March 2006), 12.

⁴⁹ Alexander Skiba, “Transatlantic Relations and Rogue States: the Case of Adjusting U.S. Policy towards Iran” (*Wissenschaft und Sicherheit*, no.1, 21 January 2007), 11, http://www.sicherheitspolitik.de/uploads/media/wus_01_2007_transatlantic_relations.pdf.

⁵⁰ Sauer, “Coercive Diplomacy by the EU,” 618.

concealing parts of its nuclear program and of not replying to numerous inquiries about its program. Furthermore, the IAEA accused Iran of abstaining to wholly collaborate with the investigation about its nuclear program. In response to the report, Iran threatened to halt the enrichment “suspension” and the EU-3 implicitly threatened Iran with resorting to the Security Council in a drafted resolution warning Iran of the penalties it would face if it breached the agreement.⁵¹

To put it accurately, Iran defied the European states and decided to resume altering ‘uranium’ into “uranium gas” in September 2004. In response, the EU3 determined a deadline for Iran, the end of October 2004, to demonstrate its full obligation to and collaboration with the IAEA. Nonetheless, a further and more detailed accord was struck between EU3 and Iran on November 14, 2004, recognized as “Paris agreement.”⁵² This new agreement obliged Iran to halt “uranium-enrichment” activities and offered at the same time a bigger “carrot” through a European pledge to negotiate with Iran over a comprehensive economic “trade” treaty and another European assurance for Iran to have the right of entry to the civilian nuclear technology for medical and energy rationales.⁵³

Two months after the agreement, which was perceived as an additional European accomplishment, “working groups” from both sides launched preparatory negotiations for a lasting accord. Nevertheless, in the beginning of 2005, Iran again cavorted on its desire to resume enriching uranium in a small scale, which entailed another round of negotiations with the Europeans.⁵⁴ The important point about the European states' stance on the Iranian crisis was that even though Iran defied them, maneuvered, and even resumed enriching uranium since the Tehran agreement until the end of 2005, the Europeans were still unwilling to back the American yearning to take the case to the Security Council.⁵⁵

The Bush administration’s guiding principles with respect to Iran's nuclear crisis were overwhelmingly associated with its global war on terrorism, particularly with its twin confrontations in Afghanistan and Iraq. In other words, the Iranian case was addressed against the backdrop of the developments and failures in these two wars, which gripped most of the American administration’s attention and capabilities. Iran's nuclear crisis was a conflict-ridden

⁵¹ Seaboyer, “EU-3 and the Iranian Nuclear Program,” 101-102.

⁵² Sauer, “Coercive Diplomacy by the EU,” 619.

⁵³ Kutchesfahani, “Iran’s Nuclear Challenge,” 12.

⁵⁴ Seaboyer, “EU-3 and the Iranian Nuclear Program,” 102.

⁵⁵ Einhorn, “A Transatlantic Strategy on Iran's Nuclear Program,” 22-23.

case within the American administration itself, between the “hawks,” who advocated “regime change,” and the “doves,” which backed diplomatic “engagement.”⁵⁶ Nevertheless, the American posture was to refuse negotiations with Iran, and Americans were also doubtful about the European negotiating endeavor with Tehran. They even proclaimed that the European diplomatic negotiation offers were unequivocally exploited and maneuvered by Iran as a technique to buy time and, in the same vein, to develop its clandestine nuclear activities.⁵⁷

Throughout 2003 and 2004, the United States persisted to take the case to the Security Council as a prelude to chastise and even isolate Iran. In November 2003, the United States did not only refuse to play a part in Europe’s negotiations with Iran, but it also robustly attempted to sway the “members of the IAEA board of governors,” particularly the EU3, to adopt a tougher resolution against Iran. A resolution that combines a warning to Iran, if it does not fully comply with the IAEA, the issue would be passed to the Security Council. However, the European member states rejected the American suggestions numerous times and preferred to give negotiations with Iran more than one chance. In September 2004, in the wake of Iran’s contravention of the Tehran agreement and its resumption of enriching uranium, the United States went once more in its way to guarantee a majority within the IAEA to get a harsh resolution against Iran.⁵⁸ To put it precisely, the United States proposed a resolution that determined October 31, 2004, as a cut-off date for compliance with the NPT and for halting uranium enrichment. Besides, the United States supported a regular “mechanism” to send the case to the Security Council. Yet again, European members refused to follow the American tendency to submit the case to the Security Council based on a conclusion that insisting on sanctions would undermine the “negotiation” process and would even reinforce the extremists within Iran and their keenness on nuclear deterrence.⁵⁹

In brief, since the eruption of the nuclear crisis in August 2002 until the end of 2004, transatlantic divergences were evident over the best tools to address its consequences. The United States came to the conclusion that isolation, sanctions, and regime change were the best instruments. Conversely, the European Union, led by the EU3, believed that negotiations,

⁵⁶ Zaborowski, “Bush’s Legacy and American’s Policy,” 63-64.

⁵⁷ Kristin Archick, “European Views and Policies towards the Middle East” (CRC Report for Congress, Updated December 21, 2005), 19.

⁵⁸ Skiba, “Transatlantic Relations and Rogue States,” 26-27.

⁵⁹ Archick, “European Views and Policies towards the Middle East,” 19.

diplomacy, and economic incentives were the most appropriate tools. Based on its judgment that the Iranian behavior would not be changed but by coercive actions and that its bad behavior should not be rewarded, the United States turned down an Iranian proposal to settle down and normalize their relations in 2003. In addition, the United States opted for the Security Council to force Iran to comply with the NPT; otherwise sanctions would be the sole alternative. Furthermore, the United States refused to hold direct negotiations with Iran because that would have meant legitimizing the Iranian regime. The American refusal to negotiate with Iran paved the way for the EU3 to take the helm and negotiate with the Iranian regime. Based on the European judgment that sanctions, isolation and regime change would not help to stop the Iranian nuclear program and that diplomacy backed by economic carrots would lead to more efficacies, European initiatives to negotiate with Iran came to the fore. Despite the roughness of the negotiations, the European Union managed to strike two key accords with Iran to suspend enriching uranium. In addition, EU3 were determined not to refer the case to the Security Council, which went against the grain of the Bush administration.

▪ **Phase Two (2005-2009): Pragmatic Transatlantic Convergences over Iran**

By the end of 2004, the American quagmire in Iraq was dreadfully marked, European negotiations with Tehran were in ups and downs, and the American Presidential elections brought George W. Bush for a second term. However, the fundamental momentous factor for the transatlantic convergence was the American realization of the limits of its power to dissuade Iran from acquiring nuclear weapons and a mounting diplomatic trend in the Bush administration's second term. A further and deeper momentum for diplomacy and direct dialogue with Iran materialized in Barack Obama's administration.

• **Transatlantic Convergence: Americans “Softer” and Europeans “Harder” stance**

Following his reelection, President Bush attempted to reach out to his European allies over the Iranian crisis. Unlike during his first term, when political rhetoric concentrated mainly over ousting the Iranian regime, whether by military force or by encouraging the opposition within Iran, Bush showed willingness for diplomatic endeavor with respect to Iran.⁶⁰ Throughout his tour through Europe in early 2005, President Bush sought to alleviate transatlantic divergences over Iraq and, at the same time, to accomplish a rapprochement with Europe over Iran's nuclear crisis. During a meeting with German Chancellor Schroder on February 23, 2005,

⁶⁰ Dueck, “Iran's Nuclear Challenge,” 201.

Bush even said plainly that both “Europe and the United States” are at the present on the “same boat” with regard to Iran. Concurrently, his new Secretary of State, Condoleezza Rice, relieved the European fears about a possible American assault on Iran by declaring that the United States had no plans to strike Iran.⁶¹

In March 2005, in a contradiction to its posture in 2003 and 2004, the United States publicly backed the European negotiations with Iran and even endorsed some degree of “economic inducements” to Tehran, provided that it fully collaborates with the European negotiators over its nuclear program.⁶² The American inducements were limited but they represented increased political support to the European approach by endorsing to back Iran's application to join the WTO (World Trade Organization) and even to provide “spare parts” to Iranian “civilian aircraft.”⁶³ Nonetheless, the United States stayed reluctant to hold direct negotiations with Iran along with the European negotiators. Therefore, with the beginning of 2005, the United States became an “indirect partner” with Europe in its talks with Iran.⁶⁴

Ups and downs became characteristic of European negotiations with Iran, since both sides endorsed the Paris agreement in November 2004. No sooner had the ink of the accord dried that Iran asked for limited “enrichment activities for research purposes.”⁶⁵ The situation was further exacerbated by the surprise victory of the Iranian hard liner President Mahmud Ahmadi-Negad in June 2005 and his taking office in August 2005.⁶⁶ When Negad took over, he substituted the negotiation team by a radical one, which made the European negotiating task more difficult.⁶⁷ On August 5, 2005, the European Union (E3), backed by the Americans, submitted a new and a more comprehensive package to Tehran as an outline for a long-lasting accord. The package's inducements encompassed Iranian “access” to the “global nuclear technology market,” a comprehensive economic and political concord between Iran and the EU, a European guarantee of the influx of nuclear fuel from Russia to Tehran as a significant sustain to its “civilian nuclear program,” and a European-American reinforcement to Iranian's accession to the WTO. The package required Iran not to “converse or enrich uranium,” to collaborate

⁶¹ Skiba, “Transatlantic Relations and Rogue States,” 28-29.

⁶² Archick, “European Views and Policies towards the Middle East,” 19.

⁶³ Tertrais, “The Iranian Nuclear Crisis,” 32.

⁶⁴ Litwak, “Living with Ambiguity: Iran and North Korea,” 104.

⁶⁵ Seaboyer, “EU-3 and the Iranian Nuclear Program,” 102.

⁶⁶ Kutchesfahani, “Iran's Nuclear Challenge,” 9.

⁶⁷ Sahar Roudsari Arfazadeh, “Talking A Way the Crisis? the E3/EU- Iran Negotiations on Nuclear Issues” (EU Policy paper, College of Europe, 2007), 11.

clearly with IAEA, to endorse the 'NPT Additional Protocol' in parliament by the end of 2005, to take the nuclear fuel elements from outside Iran and to bring them back after utilizing, and to officially oblige not to quit the NPT.⁶⁸

The Iranian negative response was strict, speedy and even predictable. Negad had previously assured Iran's ultimate "right" to possess a "nuclear fuel cycle," as well as "enrichment and reprocessing." The Iranian rejection of the European proposal was accompanied by an Iranian initiative to "convert uranium". The European Union reacted by declaring that the negotiation process had come to its end and a new phase of escalation came to the fore.⁶⁹

At this moment, the European Union cooperated with the United States within the IAEA to enact a resolution to send the Iranian case to the Security Council. However, the transatlantic allies' pursuit was opposed by "China, Russia and India". Nevertheless, both Europe and the United States managed on September 24, 2005, to secure the "majority of the IAEA's board member" states to declare Iran "in non-compliance with the NPT" and threatened to remove the case to the Security Council if Iran did not comply.⁷⁰ A tougher European posture towards Tehran became evident because Iran, according to the European perception, had crossed the "red line." European member states even managed for the first time to persuade "Russia and China" to vote for the American-European resolution in the IAEA. Furthermore, Europe insisted on an Iranian suspension of enrichment to take up negotiations.⁷¹ This European hardness coincided with an American softness, when both the United States and Europe endorsed a Russian offer to enrich the Iranian uranium in Moscow and to send it to Tehran later. However, Iran refused and claimed its right to enrich uranium within Iran and not abroad.⁷²

The Iranian defiant behavior, according to the Europeans and the Americans, reached its acme at the beginning of 2006, when a new round of negotiations reached an impasse. Iran also decided to smash the "IAEA seals on facilities for enriching uranium" and to resume enrichment. At this point, both Europe and the United States decided to send the case to the Security Council.⁷³ After 36 months of discussion and deliberations over the Iranian case within the IAEA, the file was sent to the Security Council on February 4, 2006, with the approval of the

⁶⁸ Volker Perthes and EvaWegner, "Enriching the Options: Europe, the United States, and Iran" (Discussion paper, Stiftung Wissenschaft Und Politik, German Institute for International and Security Affairs, Berlin, May 2006), 3.

⁶⁹ Sauer, "Coercive Diplomacy by the EU," 620.

⁷⁰ Archick, "European Views and Policies towards the Middle East," 20.

⁷¹ Sauer, "Coercive Diplomacy by the EU," 620.

⁷² Archick, "European Views and Policies towards the Middle East," 20.

⁷³ Seaboyer, "EU-3 and the Iranian Nuclear Program," 104.

European Union, the United States, China and Russia. Iran reacted by halting its collaboration with the IAEA and by an increase in the speed of enrichment in defiance of the resolution.⁷⁴

- Iran As A Battlefield Among Major Global Powers At The Security Council

The year 2006 witnessed a new episode in the Iranian nuclear crisis. In 2006, transatlantic convergence became evident, the American quandary in Iraq augmented, Iranian defiance greatly amplified, and novel powerful players, particularly China and Russia, came into the game. The United States' new National Security Strategy in 2006 acknowledged Iran as the greatest defiance it faces, not only due to the Iranian pursuit of a nuclear program but also because the country harbored and sustained terrorists, menaced "Israel," disrupted the "Middle East peace," initiated upheavals in Iraq, and suppressed its own people.⁷⁵ Despite such cruel rhetoric, the new American strategy did not explicitly mention the use of force as an option to address the Iranian nuclear threat. In addition, there were not many tools available to the American administration to pressure Iran. The United States had "no trade, no direct contacts and no diplomatic" ties to bargain with.⁷⁶ However, the possibilities of resorting to material force to sway Iran were never dropped entirely. In other words, the United States formally acknowledged diplomacy as a tool of action, but never wiped out the military tool. Anna Zakharchenko eloquently expressed this American tendency:

Officially, the U.S.... [backs] diplomatic solution. Yet it is also ready for coercive measures. That has been the U.S. position for quite a long time now: "All options are on the table, of course, in any situation. But diplomacy is the first option," said President Bush back in 2004 and has kept this position up until [he retired].⁷⁷

Hence, the United States pursued diplomatic efforts along with the European states within the Security Council in an endeavor to summon an international consensus and face Iran with severe sanctions if it does not give up its pursuit for a nuclear bomb. A unanimous and non-obligatory 'Presidential Statement,' issued by the Security Council on March 29, 2006, was the starting point. The statement expressed the international community's anxiety towards the Iranian recommencement of "enriching uranium" and its suspension to work together with the

⁷⁴ Sauer, "Coercive Diplomacy by the EU," 620.

⁷⁵ Christine Gray, "The Bush Doctrine Revisited: the 2006 National Security Strategy of the USA," *Chinese Journal of International Law* 5, no. 3(2006): 564.

⁷⁶ Zakharchenk, "EU and U.S. Strategies against Terrorism and WMD," 28-29.

⁷⁷ Ibid., 29-30.

“IAEA under the additional protocol.”⁷⁸ While all of the global players within the Security Council plus Germany (P5+1 formula) agreed not to let Iran possess a nuclear bomb, they diverged over the extent to which Iran should be pressured. Where the transatlantic partners opted for an unequivocal transcript stipulating that the Iranian nuclear threat is a “threat to international peace and security” as a prelude to enforce sanctions, Russia and China insisted that such a presidential statement should not include any text that might lead to sanctions against Iran.⁷⁹ The Presidential Statement even gave Iran 30 days to cooperate, but the Iranian response was clear when the Iranian president declared in April that “Iran had successfully enriched uranium.”⁸⁰

In May 2006, the most significant swing in the American pendulum towards the Iranian nuclear program materialized when the Secretary of State, Condoleezza Rice, announced that the United States was ready to “join the multilateral negotiation process” that the EU3 had started 36 month ago. Rice offered the possibility of giving Iran “carrots” as inducements.⁸¹ However, this American offer coincided with a provision that Iran initially stops enriching uranium.⁸² On the other side, the European Union's posture towards Iran grew to be tougher and harder, particularly with regard to economic sanctions.⁸³

It can be considered an enormous success that both Europe and the United States managed to reach a consensus between the “E3, the United States, Russia and China” to put forward the most comprehensive package of inducements to Tehran by Solana as a representative to the P5+1. In June 2006, discussions and deliberations between Solana and Larijani, “the chief Iranian negotiator,” took place where Solana offered a package that incorporated for the first time a “direct US engagement in the negotiations,” a transfer of “western nuclear technology” supported by the United States, and a pledge of “lifting the United States sanctions imposed on Tehran.”⁸⁴ It can be argued that this offer was a European achievement because a consensus was struck and Iran had to opt between collaboration and sanctions. Anthony Seaboyer and Oliver Thranert commented that:

⁷⁸ Seaboyer, “EU-3 and the Iranian Nuclear Program,” 104.

⁷⁹ Perthes, “Enriching the Options: Europe, the United States,” 4.

⁸⁰ Zaborowski, “Bush's Legacy and American's Policy,” 70.

⁸¹ Skiba, “Transatlantic Relations and Rogue States,” 8.

⁸² Sauer, “Coercive Diplomacy by the EU,” 621.

⁸³ Dueck, “Iran's Nuclear Challenge,” 202.

⁸⁴ Mark Fitzpatrick, “Can Iran's Nuclear Capability Be Kept Latent?,” *Survival* 49, no.1(2007): 33-58.

The three European countries [achieved] ...their most significant success. At a meeting of the foreign ministers of [the P5+1] in Vienna [in] June 2006, these governments agreed to confront Iran with a clear choice: either open negotiations that could lead to an improvement of relations...; or pursue with such project, but then face severe sanctions.⁸⁵

Nevertheless, a defiant and self-confident Iran, supported by its emerging regional power and by daunting American predicaments in Iraq and Afghanistan, refused the package. Negad declared on September 28, 2006, that Iran “would not suspend enrichment for even one day.” Therefore, Solana informed the P5+1 that the negotiation process came to its end. Nonetheless, the American engagement with Europe and its willingness to negotiate with Iran convinced Europeans to employ harshness and threats of economic sanctions over Iran. In other words, the United States “by joining the Europeans in offering carrots persuaded” them “to join the Americans in threatening sticks.”⁸⁶

With the Iranian refusal, intensive deliberations embarked within the Security Council. Iran turned out to be a “big game,” not only between transatlantic partners but also among all global powers: EU3, the United States, China and Russia. As a manifestation, the United States attempted, in May 2006, to incorporate an “enforcement provision” into a UNSC mandate against Iran, with the support of “France and Britain,” yet “Russia and China” rejected it.⁸⁷ Nonetheless, it took 14 days of deliberations and compromises to endorse the first UNSC resolution on July 31, 2006. The resolution (1646) was endorsed by 14 out of 15 permanent and non-permanent members of the Security Council, with Qatar the only state that refused it. Under chapter seven of the UN Charter, the resolution asked Iran to suspend its enrichment activities by the end of August 2006 to show compliance; otherwise it would face a new mandate that would contain economic sanctions.⁸⁸

By the end of October 2006, Iran did not respond and even ignored the resolution. The 25 member states of the European Union reacted and endorsed to maintain deliberations within the Security Council corridors “about sanctions against Iran”. Deliberations were intense, particularly between the United States and Russia, about their “support to the Iranian Bushehr reactor”. The EU had to meddle and compromise in order to reach a consensus among the five

⁸⁵ Seaboyer, “EU-3 and the Iranian Nuclear Program,” 104.

⁸⁶ Fitzpatrick, “Can Iran's Nuclear Capability Be Kept Latent?,” 41-42.

⁸⁷ Zakharchenko, “EU and U.S. Strategies against Terrorism and WMD,” 33.

⁸⁸ Sauer, “Coercive Diplomacy by the EU,” 621.

permanent members of the Security Council.⁸⁹ Finally, on December 23, 2006, after 120 days of the Iranian refusal to the first resolution and after 60 days of deliberations in the Security Council, a second resolution (1737) was collectively endorsed. This resolution stipulated a limited number of sanctions against Iran. It prohibited “technical and financial assistance to Iran's enrichment, reprocessing, heavy-water and ballistic missile programmes”. In addition, it froze up the assets of a dozen individuals and 10 institutes engaged in these nuclear activities. It also imposed constraints on the IAEA technical cooperation with Iran and put constraints on the freedom of travel of Iranian individuals engaged in any nuclear activities. It should be mentioned that the mandate ignored mentioning the Russian support for the Bushehr reactor to ensure the Russian support of the whole resolution. In the end, the mandate granted Iran two months to meet the terms of the Security Council and assured that it will take more “measures under Article 41”. The Iranian response to these sanctions was more boldness in its non compliance.⁹⁰

In fact, these sanctions were perceived as a genuine diplomatic accomplishment for the American administration, which had always sought imposing sanctions on Iran. However, the Iranian regime could bear these sanctions because they were limited and would not influence the Iranian nuclear capabilities, as “China and Russia” desired. These two permanent states in the Security Council did not support any severe sanctions related to “Iranian oil and gas”. France and Germany would also not sustain a resolution from the Security Council to assault Iran.⁹¹ Both Russia and China made sure that the last resolution did not contain any harsh penalties or any text that paves the way for any likelihood of using martial force against Iran. This explains the fact that the “UNSCR 1737” did not stipulate that the Iranian threat represented a “threat to international peace and security,” which might have been used as a pretext to launch a military attack against Iran. To sum up, both the United States and Europe faced vigorous resistance from Russia and China to impose harsher punitive measures against Iran.⁹²

Despite the American-European convergence over imposing sanctions over Iran, they diverged on the nature and the degree of these sanctions. The European member states opted for “progressive, proportionate and reversible” sanctions that could change the behavior of the Iranian regime for more compliance, whereas the United States wished for severe sanctions that

⁸⁹ Ibid., 622.

⁹⁰ Fitzpatrick, “Can Iran's Nuclear Capability Be Kept Latent?,” 43.

⁹¹ Dueck, “Iran's Nuclear Challenge,” 201-202.

⁹² Fitzpatrick, “Can Iran's Nuclear Capability Be Kept Latent?,” 45.

would undermine and even weaken the grasp of the Iranian regime on the state and pave the way for regime change from within. This divergence was highly clarified in the American wide and antagonistic interpretation of these sanctions by an American request to the nations of the world to sever any relations with the Iranian nuclear program. In addition, the United States pursued a blockade on Iran's "financial" services with the rest of the world. The financial blockade was employed by the 'US Treasury' when it banned the Bank Sepan on June 9, 2007, and the Bank Saderat in September 2007 because they were engaged in the Iranian nuclear program.⁹³ Furthermore, the American administration was cautious to renovate in September 2006 the "Iranian-Libya Sanctions Act that was due to expire in August 2006" under the increasing Iranian nuclear threat.⁹⁴ Notwithstanding the defeat of the Republicans in the US Congressional elections in November 2006 and the triumph of the "moderates" in the Iranian local election in December 2006, the American administration sent a clear message of the viability of the military option against Tehran when it "sent a second aircraft carrier to the Persian Gulf in January 2007". This action was consistent with the American long repeated stance that all alternatives are on the table, but diplomacy comes first.⁹⁵

Nevertheless, due to the lack of the military option in the wake of its military stretch in Iraq and Afghanistan and the lack of international support of a military strike, the United States, supported by its European allies, vigorously pursued an active policy of sanctions in 2007 as a way to exploit the escalating Iranian defiance to the international community and its acceleration of its nuclear program. Given the escalating and the defying Iranian behavior, the five permanent members of the Security Council acted collectively to impose extra sanctions on Iran. On March 24, 2007, a third resolution (1747) was endorsed in an attempt to tighten sanctions against Iran. The resolution was mainly directed against the 'Revolutionary Guard Corps' and targeted two institutions that the 'Guard and commanders of organization' have power over. The mandate put again a final deadline to Iran to comply and suspend enrichment.⁹⁶ In addition, it asked Iran to fully work together with the IAEA to answer "outstanding issues concerning its nuclear programs" and to "ratify the Additional protocol to its IAEA safeguards agreement."⁹⁷

⁹³ Ibid., 45-46.

⁹⁴ Rose Gottemoeller, "The Evolution of Sanctions in Practice and Theory," *Survival* 49, no. 4 (2007-2008): 106.

⁹⁵ Sauer, "Coercive Diplomacy by the EU," 622.

⁹⁶ Gottemoeller, "Evolution of Sanctions in Practice and Theory," 107.

⁹⁷ Paul Kerr, "Security Council Considers New Iran Sanctions," *Arms Control Today* (March 2007), <http://www.armscontrol.org/print/2331.html>.

The Iranian defiance continued and the deadline passed without an Iranian reply. The Iranian insubordination prompted the United States to seek for more comprehensive and tightened sanctions against the Iranian government.⁹⁸ In June 2007, during the American and the European attempts to issue more sanctions at the Security Council, Iran offered to cooperate with the IAEA and to establish an “action plan” to clarify “outstanding issues” regarding its nuclear program.⁹⁹ In response to the Iranian offer, the IAEA asked Tehran to completely respond to “questions about its suspicious nuclear activities” and Iran pledged to give a clear and detailed response to the IAEA's inquiries. As a consequence of the Iranian pledge, the chief manager of IAEA asked the P5+1 to grant the country some space and time to get those questions answered. Hence, the P5+1 endorsed Mohamed El Baradei's request coincided with an American doubtfulness of the outcome.¹⁰⁰

On August 21, 2007, after a month of several meetings, “a work plan” was reached between Iran and the IAEA. The plan was a tool to make Iran clarify and reply to the ambivalent inquiries about its nuclear program as well as to collaborate with the IAEA regarding its “Natanz uranium-enrichment” facility. That agreement was perceived differently by the P5+1. While the United States and the European powers considered this a step forward, they assured that it is not enough to get rid of their anxiety over Iran's nuclear activities and to ensure Iran's full compliance to the international community's demands to suspend its enrichment activities. For that reason, the United States and its European allies opted for imposing more sanctions on Iran, whereas the other permanent member states, Russia in particular, persisted in giving “time” to Iran to answer the inquiries about its “nuclear” program.¹⁰¹

As a result, splits within the Security Council over the sanctions against Iran were widened. Where the United States and European states attempted at the end of September 2007 to impose more sanctions against Iran, Russia and China refused to and asked for more time for Tehran to collaborate with the IAEA. Faced by the Russian and the Chinese resistance to punish Iran, both the United States and France affirmed their readiness to act “outside the Security Council” against Iran. In fact, the United States has always imposed sanctions against Iran

⁹⁸ Gottemoeller, “Evolution of Sanctions in Practice and Theory,” 107

⁹⁹ Paul Kerr, “Iran Offers to Resolve Issues with IAEA,” *Arms Control Today* (July/August 2007), <http://www.armscontrol.org/epublish/1/v37n6.html>.

¹⁰⁰ Gottemoeller, “Evolution of Sanctions in Practice and Theory,” 107.

¹⁰¹ Peter Crail, “Iran Agrees on Work Plan with IAEA,” *Arms Control Today* (September 2007), http://www.armscontrol.org/act/2007_09/IranIAEA.html.

outside the Security Council. The new element was the French position, which was consistent with the newly elected French President ‘Sarkozy’s’ tendency to pressure Iran, whether through the Security Council or by separate actions outside the UN framework. This French view was not shared by the German posture, which insisted on the UN framework to punish Iran.¹⁰²

Given the failure of the Security Council to reach a consensus on a new resolution to rebuke Iran, a ‘joint statement’ was endorsed on September 28, 2007, by the P5+1 and Solana. It notified Iran that new sanctions would be adopted by the Security Council if Iran did not comply with the international demands to suspend the process of uranium enrichment. Parallel to this, the United States pursued its own policy to squeeze Iran's economy; the ‘Treasury Department’ adopted extra sanctions on “23 entities and individuals” on October 25, 2007.¹⁰³

In November 2007, two significant events took place regarding the Iranian nuclear program. The first was a “report” announced in mid-November by the IAEA, assessing Iran's nuclear program and the extent to which Iran collaborated with the IAEA in answering the outstanding questions about its program. The report encompassed a mixture of progress and failure with respect to the Iranian behavior. In other words, it announced that some improvements were accomplished regarding a response to some of the ambivalent inquiries about Iran's nuclear program. At the same time, it reported that IAEA’s information about Iran's nuclear program was decreasing and that the IAEA was therefore incapable of giving a clear-cut confirmation that Iran did not have a clandestine nuclear program. In addition, the report indicated that Iran did not halt enriching uranium but had instead reached a “key enrichment milestone” and that if Iran constantly pursued this level, it would be able to attain “highly enriched uranium” required for “one nuclear weapon within a year”. Once the report was published, transatlantic allies, particularly the “United States, France and Britain” sought for further sanctions on Iran, whereas “China and Russia” rebuffed.¹⁰⁴

The second episode was the release of the “US Intelligence Estimate (NIE) on Iran” at the end of 2007. The findings of the NIE were very significant, because it announced “with high confidence” that Iran had suspended its “nuclear” activities as a result of the mounting

¹⁰² ___, “UN Iran Sanctions Push Thwarted for Now,” *Arms Control Today* (October 2007), http://www.armscontrol.org/act/2007_10/UNIranSanctions.html.

¹⁰³ ___, “UN Sanctions Decisions Awaits,” *Arms Control Today* (November 2007), http://www.armscontrol.org/act/2007_11/UNIran.html.

¹⁰⁴ ___, “IAEA Issues Mixed Findings on Iran,” *Arms Control Today* (December 2007), http://www.armscontrol.org/act/2007_12/IAEAIran.html.

transatlantic investigation and anxiety which were interpreted as more “pressure” on Tehran. In addition, the NIE declared that it was not able to determine Tehran's intents of building up a nuclear bomb.¹⁰⁵ The NEI report provided a mixture of “good” and alarming news. The “good” news was that there was still a considerable time before Iran can turn into a nuclear power, whereas the alarming news was that the very high point of “enrichment capacity” that Iran had reached coincided with another alarming fact, namely that Iran was developing “nuclear warheads.”¹⁰⁶ The release of the NIE debilitated the desperate American endeavor to summon a solid universal coalition, particularly among the major global powers, against Tehran's nuclear program. In addition, it proved the fallacy of the American proclamations of the urgency of halting a nuclear Iran by a military attack. Furthermore, Russia and China used the report as an excellent excuse for rebuffing extra sanctions on Iran.¹⁰⁷ Thus, by the beginning of 2008 a sticky situation about Iran's nuclear program was established. While Iran pursued its enrichment activities, the United States and Europe sought to tighten the sanctions on Iran, and China and Russia rebuffed to impose extra sanctions and even if they were to accept sanctions they made sure that they were limited and not military.¹⁰⁸

Hence, a quagmire and deadlock marked the Iranian nuclear program from the time it was referred to the Security Council by the end of 2005 until the end of the Bush administration's second term. This was further confirmed by the beginning of 2008, following the NEI and the IAEA reports in November 2007. Despite that impasse, a compromise among the P5+1 was reached on March 1, 2008. The first part of the compromise among the six powers was an embracement of a new “resolution (1803)” that expanded sanctions against Iran and banned Iran from having any monetary or hi-tech support for its nuclear activities. The second part of the compromise was an agreement to “further enhance diplomatic efforts” to reach a settlement of the Iran crisis in the context of the “dual track approach.”¹⁰⁹ Therefore, the resolution included a stipulation of the increase of inducements to Tehran, which was a Russian and Chinese provision in order to endorse further sanctions. Thus, the resolution was

¹⁰⁵ Litwak, “Living with Ambiguity: Iran and North Korea,” 91.

¹⁰⁶ “Iran Policy After The NEI: Modest Findings, Revolutionary Effects,” <http://www.blog.gmfus.org/2007/12/11/iran-policy-after-the-nie-modest-findings-revolutionary-affects.html>.

¹⁰⁷ Litwak, “Living with Ambiguity: Iran and North Korea,” 91.

¹⁰⁸ Kyle Atwell, “A Different Kind of Quagmire: Iran,” (Atlantic Review, A Press Digest for Transatlantic Affairs, February 12, 2008), <http://www.atlanticreview.org/archives/998-A-Different-Kind-of-Quagmire-Iran.html>.

¹⁰⁹ Peter Crail, “Security Council Adopts More Iran Sanctions,” *Arms Control Today* (April 2008), http://www.armscontrol.org/act/2008_04/IranSanctions.html.

accompanied by a 'statement,' issued by Britain as a representative of the P 5+1, that pledged to promote a package of inducements which were previously proposed to Tehran in June 2006.¹¹⁰

On June 14, 2008, as a result of the compromise on the resolution 1803, the P5+1 proposed to Tehran a more inclusive and "revamped" package of inducements, accompanied by a letter signed by the foreign ministers of the P5+1. This offer was more comprehensive than that of 2006 in specifying the "economic and political" gains should Iran suspend its enrichment program. In addition, it contained an implicit "security guarantee to Iran" by assuring that the "threat of use of force" was not an option any more.¹¹¹

Five days later, the representatives of the P5+1 held a meeting with the Iranian representative in Geneva. The Geneva meeting witnessed a dramatic shift in the American posture, which has always stipulated that Iran halts its enrichment first in order to directly hold talks with the US. In an American concession of such prerequisite, the United States sent the 'Undersecretary of State for Political Affairs, William Burns,' to join in the talks with Iran. Nevertheless, Iran rebuffed to halt or suspend its uranium enrichment processes. Therefore, the quagmire situation emerged again, in which the United States and Europe pushed for more sanctions whereas Russia and China remained reluctant. As a consequence of this impasse within the Security Council, the European Union imposed a new package of sanctions against Iran on August 7, 2008. The European sanctions stipulated scrutinizing any "cargo to and from Iran," whether at sea or in air. In addition, it put financial restrictions on Iran such as "export credits, guarantees, or insurance." Furthermore, it banned business with certain Iranian banks involved in the nuclear activities.¹¹²

The United States separately and in concurrence with its attempts with European member states within the Security Council to pressurize Iran, continued to utilize its financial influence to impose more financial restrictions on Tehran through the 'Treasury Department'. In the context of "Executive Order 13382" issued by President George W. Bush in June 2005, the Treasury Department solidified the "assets of 13 persons and institutes" associated with Iran's nuclear

¹¹⁰ Ibid.,

¹¹¹ ____, "Iran Presented With Revamped Incentives," *Arms Control Today* (July/August 2008), http://www.armscontrol.org/act/2008_04/IranSanctions.html.

¹¹² ____, "Iran Not Receptive to Revised Nuclear Proposal," *Arms Control Today* (September 2008), http://www.armscontrol.org/act/2008_04/IranSanctions.html.

activities. In addition, the several large European companies declared that they would stop any “investment in Iran's oil and gas sectors” in the near future.¹¹³

With the renewed deadlock between the transatlantic allies on one hand and Russia and China on the other hand about sanctions over Iran on October 20, 2008, transatlantic allies threatened to embark harsher sanctions on Iran outside the Security Council. Yet, a new bargain was struck among the P5+1, which resulted in a fifth resolution (1835) in October 2008. This resolution did not enforce any sanctions but rather asked Iran to halt its nuclear program. However, Paris, London and Berlin indicated that they would impose other sanctions on Iran's energy sector.¹¹⁴ In spite of all these transatlantic efforts to sway Iran from enriching uranium, the IAEA reported on November 19, 2008, that Iran had not only made considerable progress in enriching uranium, but also built up its ballistic missile capabilities in defiance to five Security Council mandates and the American European sanctions outside the UN forum. Accordingly, the quagmire was not resolved.¹¹⁵

- Obama's Era: A More Pragmatic and Principled Transatlantic Convergence over Iran

From the onset of his Presidential campaign, Obama proclaimed his inclination to open a dialogue with the enemies of the United States, including the Iranian regime. Based on his strategic doctrine to make use of the American smart power, lead by diplomacy, Obama opted for a dialogue and an engagement with the Iranian regime over its nuclear ambitions.¹¹⁶ Obama's strategy was to use a “tough-minded diplomacy” founded on both the United States' soft and hard power. In other words, Obama chose to engage Iran diplomatically and unconditionally. At the same time, he pledged “tougher” economic sanctions if talks failed and a non-exclusion of the military alternative to thwart Iran from being a nuclear power.¹¹⁷

Shortly after his inauguration, Obama offered a direct and unconditional diplomatic dialogue with Iranian leaders. For half a year, Obama sought, through numerous signals, to

¹¹³ Brian Radzinsky, “Treasury Tightens Sanctions Net on Iran,” *Arms Control Today* (September 2008), http://www.armscontrol.org/act/2008_09/Treasury.html.

This order (13382) gives the Treasury and State Departments the authority to freeze the U.S. assets of foreign entities suspected of supplying or supporting the development of unconventional arms and ballistic or cruise missiles.

¹¹⁴ Peter Crail, “West May Seek Alternative Sanctions on Iran,” *Arms Control Today* (November 2008), http://www.armscontrol.org/act/2008_09/Treasury.html.

¹¹⁵ —, “Iran Forges Ahead on Enrichment,” *Arms Control Today* (December 2008), http://www.armscontrol.org/act/2008_12/Iran_enrichment.html.

¹¹⁶ Suzanne Maloney, “Sanctioning Iran: If Only It were so Simple,” *The Washington Quarterly* (2010): 132.

¹¹⁷ Stephen F. Larrabee, “Obama's Foreign Policy: Opportunities and Challenges,” *Insight Turkey* 11, no.1 (2009): 8.

construct a cooling down period between the United States and Iran in order to pave the way for direct talks. A week after entering office, Obama granted his initial interview to the Arabic channel 'Al Arabia.' In the interview, Obama demonstrated a great esteem to the Muslim, the Arab, and the Persian civilizations. He also explicitly offered an extended hand to the Iranians saying "if countries like Iran are willing to unclench their fist, they will find an extended hand from us." In March 2009, a further significant signal was delivered by a "videotaped message" from Obama to both the Iranian people and the Iranian regime celebrating the Persian New Year (Nowruz) and pledging a new start of a constructive and diplomatic dialogue.¹¹⁸

Concurrent with these diplomatic gestures, the Obama administration affirmed that it was preparing for tougher and wider economic sanctions against Iran, should the diplomatic course of action fails. By the end of April 2009, Secretary of State Hillary Clinton warned that Iran would face "crippling sanctions" if diplomacy failed to persuade Iran to wipe out its nuclear program. In mid-May 2009, Obama set the end of 2009 as a framework to assess the efficiency of diplomacy with Iran. In the same month, Obama delivered a message to the real ruler of Iran, 'Ayatollah Ali Khamenei,' in which he proposed to construct a dialogue over Iran's nuclear activities.¹¹⁹ Based on the Obama administration's gestures and willingness to negotiate with Tehran without preconditions, the (P5+1) offered the resumption of unconditional negotiations with Iran in April 2009. Although the offer was rhetorically welcomed, as it does not request Iran to halt uranium enrichment, Tehran at the same time highly praised the accomplishments in its nuclear program by the Iranian President Ahmedinejad.¹²⁰

The Obama administration endeavored to pave the regional and the global contexts for a grand bargain with Iran. In the global context, the president reached out Russia in order to guarantee its full collaboration with regard to Iran. In this respect, in February 2009 Obama formally requested assistance from the Russian President Dmitry Medvedev pertaining to Iran's nuclear dilemma. In his request, Obama made a clear linkage between alleviating Russian concerns over the US plans to install the 'missile defense' shield in Poland and Czech Republic and the "progress" in thwarting Iran from being a nuclear state.¹²¹ On April 5, at the Prague summit, Obama took a further bold and symbolic step by declaring his far-reaching goal of a

¹¹⁸ Nader Entessar, "Iran's Nuclear Decision-Making Calculus," *Middle East Policy* 16, no.2 (2009): 35.

¹¹⁹ Andrew Parastiliti, "Iran: Diplomacy and Deterrence," *Survival* 51, no. 5 (2009): 7.

¹²⁰ Gergorin- Jean Louis, "Iran: Breaking the Deadlock," *Survival* 51, no. 3 (2009): 19.

¹²¹ Peter Crail, "Obama Seeks Russian Cooperation on Iran," *Arms Control Today* (April 2009), http://www.armscontrol.org/act/2009_04/IranRussia.html.

world free of nuclear weapons. One major reason behind this policy was to improve the global consent to tighten sanctions against the states which seek nuclear power, such as Iran.¹²² In the same speech, Obama promised to reduce both the Russian and the United States' nuclear arsenal through negotiating a novel accord with Russia as well as to ratify the "Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty" (CTBT).¹²³ In that sense, Obama dramatically changed US nuclear policy from a constant increase to a decrease and even an "elimination of these weapons."¹²⁴ On the regional level, Obama considered solving the Arab-Israeli conflict a high priority in order to secure Arab assistance for the United States in addressing the Iranian conundrum. In addition, the United States improved its diplomatic relations with Syria as a way to isolate it from Iran.¹²⁵

Despite the Iranian approval to negotiate with the P5+1 over its nuclear question, the ruling elite in Tehran was reluctant to commence meetings before the presidential elections in June 2009. Therefore, the Obama administration, Europe and the rest of the P5+1 waited and expected that the presidential elections in Iran would turn out decisively in favor of Ahmadinejad. However, the elections results, as observers noted, were manipulated for the sake of Ahmadinejad with the consent of the regime. This situation led to massive demonstrations and riots against the Islamic regime, which responded with suppression, arrests and trials of the opposition. The Iranian regime's legitimacy crisis slowed down negotiations with the P5+1.¹²⁶ The Obama administration's initial reaction to the domestic crisis in Iran was that the United States would maintain its diplomatic course of action with Tehran. However, when it turned out that the opposition to the Iranian regime was increasing and that Obama was criticized domestically for not taking the side of the "reformists," a harsher rhetoric against the Iranian regime became a possibility. Nevertheless, the United States remained committed to its "engagement" policy with Tehran.¹²⁷ This was confirmed by Secretary of State Hillary Rodham Clinton on June 17, 2009, when she emphasized that the "United States is obviously waiting to

¹²² Scott D.Sagan, "The Case for No First Use," *Survival* 51, no. 5 (2009): 163-174.

¹²³ Cole Harvey, "Obama Calls for Nuclear Weapons-Free World," *Arms Control Today* (May 2009), http://www.armscontrol.org/act/2009_5/Obama.html.

¹²⁴ Joseph Cirincione and Alexandra Bell, "Prague and the Transformation of American Nuclear Policy," in: *the Obama Moment: European and American Perspectives*, eds. Vasconcelos de Alvaro and Marcin Zaborowski (Paris: European Union Institute for Security Studies, September 2009), 91.

¹²⁵ Mohamed Motawe, "From Bush to Obama. A new American Strategy towards Iran," *El Ahram El Massi*, trans, 10 May 2009, national edition.

¹²⁶ James Dobbins, "Negotiating with Iran: Reflections from Personal Experience," *The Washington Quarterly* 33, no. 1(2010): 159.

¹²⁷ Maloney, "Sanctioning Iran," 134-135.

see the outcome of the internal Iranian process, but our intent is to pursue whatever opportunities might exist in the future with Iran.”¹²⁸

However, the American patience started to wane because Iran delayed its response to the P5+1 request to hold “multilateral talks.” Consequently, Obama warned Iran that the hand extended for dialogue and peace will not be held out indefinitely. In August 2009, Hillary Clinton declared that the United States is not “going to keep the window open forever.”¹²⁹ In the same month, Iran unexpectedly allowed the IAEA to have “access to two key nuclear facilities” thirty days before the G-8 convened to assess the Iranian behavior with regard to its nuclear activities.¹³⁰ After a long wait, Iran responded to the P5+1 offer and announced in September 2009 its readiness for multilateral talks on all the security concerns of the West but not over its uranium enrichment program, which was seen as the “natural, legal, and sovereign” right of the Iranian nation.¹³¹ Iran even enlarged the list of topics to be addressed in any talks to “global poverty, the Arab-Israeli peace process, and rights to space explorations” and deliberately ignored to mention its nuclear activities as a subject to be addressed. Based on the Iranian response, the P5+1 determined the first of October 2009 to initiate negotiations in Geneva.¹³²

The Obama administration, in preparation for the October negotiations, endeavored to diplomatically pressure Tehran. On September 17, 2009, the Obama administration formally renounced Bush’s missile defense shield scheme in Poland and the Czech Republic, which had constantly antagonized Russia. In its place, the United States envisioned a novel “missile defense program, designed around the Navy’s Standard Missile-3 (SM-3), to counter short- and medium-range Iranian missiles,” according to Secretary of Defense Robert Gates.”¹³³ Moreover, on September 25, 2009, the United States, France and the United Kingdom issued a common ‘statement’ by Obama, Sarkozy, and Brown that Iran has been building a covert “uranium-enrichment facility” at Qom. Germany, along with the three states, considered this new

¹²⁸ Peter Crail, “US Still Committed to Engaging Iran,” *Arms Control Today* (July/August 2009), http://www.armscontrol.org/act/2009_07-08/Iran.html.

¹²⁹ Parastiliti, “Iran: Diplomacy and Deterrence,” 5.

¹³⁰ Peter Crail, “Iran Grants Reactor Access to IAEA,” *Arms Control Today* (September 2009), http://www.armscontrol.org/act/2009_09/IranIAEA.html.

¹³¹ Giora Eiland, “Israel’s Military Option,” *The Washington Quarterly* (2010): 121.

¹³² Maloney, “Sanctioning Iran,” 35.

¹³³ Cole Harvey, “Obama Shifts Gears on Missile Defense,” *Arms Control Today* (October 2009), http://www.armscontrol.org/act/2009_10/missiledefense.html.

revelation “inconsistent with a peaceful program.” Nevertheless, the four countries confirmed that they would pursue a diplomatic course of action with Iran in Geneva.¹³⁴

In the Geneva talks, an agreement between Iran and the P5+1 was reached in principle. According to this agreement, Iran permitted the IAEA to inspect the recently “revealed enriched uranium facility near the holy city of Qom” and also agreed to send a proportion of its enriched uranium abroad and to import it later as fuel after being transformed.¹³⁵ Later on, the IAEA proposed a detailed agreement and the P5+1 endorsed it. The detailed agreement stipulated that “Iran would send out 1,200 kilograms, or almost 70 percent, of its estimated growing stock of low-enriched uranium (LEU) and receive a multiyear supply of 19.75 percent fuel for the small Tehran Research Reactor. The LEU would travel to Russia for further enrichment and then to France for fabrication into fuel, before being shipped back to Tehran in about a year.”¹³⁶ Iran asked for more time to respond, and gave “mixed messages” between initial approval and refusal. At the end of November 2009, Iran refused to send its enriched uranium abroad, and the United States and Europe pledged for harsher sanctions against Iran.¹³⁷

The European Union welcomed all of Obama’s diplomatic steps towards Iran and even enthusiastically supported him because his diplomatic approach had been a longstanding European request.¹³⁸ The European Union ardently supported Obama’s new nuclear policy, particularly in the Security Council when the “US-drafted resolution on enhanced disarmament and non-proliferation measures” was espoused “unanimously” on September 24, 2009. A day later, President Obama, President Sarkozy, and Prime Minister Brown revealed the Qom facility in Iran in a joint statement which Germany eventually joined. That joint statement signified the advanced extent of transatlantic convergence over the Iranian dilemma.¹³⁹ Faced with Iranian’s maneuvers and attempts to prolong its response to the Geneva agreement, France, Britain, Germany and other European states stated that they would “support more vigorous punitive

¹³⁴ Peter Crail, “Secert Iranian Enrichment Facility Revealed,” *Arms Control Today* (October 2009), http://www.armscontrol.org/act/2009_10/Iran.html.

¹³⁵ Dobbins, “Negotiating with Iran,” 159.

¹³⁶ Jacqueline Shire and David Albright, “Iran’s Growing Weapons Capability and Its Impact on Negotiations,” *Arms Control Today* (December 2009), http://www.armscontrol.org/act/2009_12/AlbrightShire.html.

¹³⁷ Peter Crail, “Iranian Response to LEU Fuel Deal Unclear,” *Arms Control Today* (November 2009), http://www.armscontrol.org/act/2009_11/Iran.html.

¹³⁸ Rouzbeh Parsi, “The Obama Effect and the Iranian Conundrum,” in: *the Obama Moment: European and American Perspectives*, eds. Alvaro De Vasconcelos and Marcin Zaborowski (Paris: European Union Institute for Security Studies, September 2009), 155.

¹³⁹ Cirincione, “Prague and the American Nuclear Policy,” 91.

measures against Iran.”¹⁴⁰ Sarkorzy even went further than Obama in his timeline to assess the efficacy of negotiations with Iran by terminating it by the end of December, emphasizing that “Iran would have until December to change course.”¹⁴¹

Russia and China were more reluctant to impose sanctions against Iran due to their close economic relations with Tehran. In other words, it was China, in particular, which heavily depended on Iran to cover “14% of its oil” imports. Russia as well has enormous economic earnings from building “nuclear power reactors” such as “the Bushehr reactor” and from its extensive “conventional” military exports to Iran.¹⁴² Although Obama reached out to Russia by abandoning the missile defense shield plan in Eastern Europe, Russia overtly refused any harsher sanctions against Iran and expressed its reluctance during Hillary Clinton’s visit to Moscow in October 2009. Russia considered sanctions “premature and counterproductive,” as long as diplomatic endeavors did not reach to an impasse.¹⁴³ However, the Russian opposition to further sanctions against Tehran was on the wane. On September 23, 2009, following a bilateral talk with President Obama, Russian President Dmitry Medvedev declared that “sanctions rarely lead to productive results, but in some cases, sanctions are inevitable.”¹⁴⁴

To sum up, Obama’s change of policy towards Iran from isolation to engagement and dialogue was highly receptive in Europe. European states also passionately welcomed Obama’s transformation of American nuclear policy. As a result, a more pragmatic and principled transatlantic convergence over Iran materialized in the P5+1 proposals to Iran for an unconditional dialogue over its nuclear program. Obama’s gestures to both the Iranian people and leaders and his endeavor to pave the global and the regional way for a grand deal with Iran were highly welcomed in Europe. When the Geneva talks seemed to fail, both Europe and the United States pledged for tougher sanctions against Iran. The stumbling blocks which hindered harsher sanctions against Iran were Russia and China. The United States exerted its utmost effort to convince Russia of its position and it worked out to lessen, to some extent, the Russian resistance to sanctions.

¹⁴⁰ Maloney, “Sanctioning Iran,” 36.

¹⁴¹ Peter Crail, “Secret Iranian Enrichment Facility Revealed,” *Arms Control Today* (October 2009), http://www.armscontrol.org/act/2009_10/Iran.html.

¹⁴² Sauer, “Coercive Diplomacy by the EU,” 627.

¹⁴³ Maloney, “Sanctioning Iran,” 141.

¹⁴⁴ Peter Crail, “Secret Iranian Enrichment Facility Revealed,” *Arms Control Today* (October 2009), http://www.armscontrol.org/act/2009_10/Iran.html.

▪ **Reasons of the Transatlantic Divergence over Iran (2002-2005)**

• Neo-Realistic Reasons of Transatlantic Divergence over Iran (2002-2005)

Despite the fact that the United States and Europe converged over the necessity of preventing Iran from being a nuclear state, both diverged over the appropriate approach. While the United States opted for isolation and regime change, the European Union opted for engagement and dialogue. The neo-realistic reasons behind these transatlantic divergences over Iran's nuclear issue are as follows:

Firstly, on a strategic level, both the Bush administration and Europe had divergent perceptions over the efficacy of international institutions to prevent Iran from acquiring WMD. The United States perceived Iran as a rogue state that should be isolated for its actions and that its government should be altered even by force, whereas the European Union upheld “diplomacy” and international organizations to change the Iranian behavior.¹⁴⁵ This transatlantic divergence in perception clearly appeared in the diverse security strategies adopted by both the United States and Europe regarding the best tools to counter the threat of WMD. The United States' strategy chose “unilateralism” and military force as guiding principles, while the European Union adhered to “effective multilateralism” as a landmark for its policy to counter WMD.¹⁴⁶

Secondly, the Iranian nuclear issue was addressed by the transatlantic partners in the context of the Afghani and Iraqi wars. The American insistence on punishing the Iranian regime or even throwing it out at the beginning of the crisis in 2003 was a result of an American feeling of strength. The triumphs of two subsequent wars that toppled the 'Taliban' and 'Saddam' regimes in both Afghanistan and Iraq were evidence of the uncontested American might. That American wax of power explained the mounting American threats of using military force to overthrow the Iranian regime at that time and also illuminated the flagrant American refusal of an early Iranian offer, through a “Swiss” mediation, to settle the Western growing suspicions over its nuclear program through a “grand bargain” in May 2003.¹⁴⁷

The American position against Iran was even toughened by accusing the Iranian regime of meddling in Iraq against the United States' interests. Consistent with an American yearning to

¹⁴⁵ Perkovich, “Towards Transatlantic Cooperation,” 5.

¹⁴⁶ Mathias Dembinski, “Transatlantic Cooperation or Discord: the United States, the European Union and Nuclear Non-Proliferation,” in: *Transatlantic Discord: Combating Terrorism and Proliferation, Preventing Crises*, eds. Franz Eder, et.al. (Baden-Baden: Nomos, 2007), 43- 47.

¹⁴⁷ Litwak, “Living with Ambiguity: Iran and North Korea,” 101.

harshly pressurize Tehran, the Bush administration sought to address the Iranian nuclear issue in the Security Council so as to impose sanctions and practice intensified isolation against the Iranian regime. This American desire was interpreted, throughout “the fall of 2003,” as an American pursuit at the IAEA to summon a tough position against Iranian nuclear activities as a prelude to take the case to the Security Council. In addition, the Bush administration rebuffed the European accord with Iran in October 2003 and judged the accord as insufficient to alleviate the US concerns over Iran's nuclear activities. Furthermore, any support of the European “negotiation” endeavor with Iran was not on the Bush administration’s horizon. Instead, the Americans tried fiercely to refer the entire case to the Security Council which was rejected by the Europeans who favored a rather diplomatic route to solve the crisis.¹⁴⁸

The European posture vis-à-vis the Iranian nuclear program, which preferred dialogue and negotiations with the Iranians, was derived from the disastrous transatlantic and European split “experience” over Iraq. Consequently, the EU3 initiative towards Tehran emanated from a genuine European desire to evade a further rift within the European Union and between Europe and the United States.¹⁴⁹ The transatlantic and European splits over Iraq revealed the weakness of the European CFSP to act or even to talk jointly. Another split over Iran would have been the straw that breaks the Camel's back. Therefore, the EU three big member states sought vigorously to act united vis-à-vis Iran to restore the European Union’s reliability as a global player.¹⁵⁰

In addition, a growing European concern about an American propensity to refer the crisis to the Security Council implied a European fear of another conflict over the appropriate reaction and a blow to the United Nations’ credibility. This explained the European inclination to address the Iranian case within the IAEA and not within the Security Council as the United States opted for from the beginning.¹⁵¹ Furthermore, the European engagement with Iran indicated a “new European assertiveness in strategic matters” to fill the gap caused by the American severance of its diplomatic relations with Iran since the Islamic Iranian revolution in 1979, to support the role of IAEA in countering proliferation of WMD, and to convince Iran to suspend “uranium enrichment” through economic incentives and through a European pledge not to refer the case to

¹⁴⁸ Alexander Skiba, *the Bush Administration's Iran Policy and Europe: from "Regime Change" to "Engagement"?* (Berlin: VDM Verlag & Co.KG, 2008), 34-35.

¹⁴⁹ Sebastian Harnisch, “Minilateralisms, Formal Institutions and Transatlantic Cooperation: the EU-3 Initiative Vis-à-vis Iran's Nuclear Program,” in: *A Hybrid Relationship: Transatlantic Security Cooperation beyond NATO*, ed. Peter Schmidt (Berlin: Peter Lang GmbH, 2008), 89.

¹⁵⁰ Tzogopoulos, “Evolution of US and EU Policy towards Iran,” 45.

¹⁵¹ Seaboyer, “EU-3 and the Iranian Nuclear Program,” 101.

the Security Council as long as Tehran collaborates with the IAEA.¹⁵² The European Union's approach was driven by a vigorous desire to prove the competence of “diplomacy and non-military instruments” as a substitute to the American doctrine of “regime change” to counter the spread of nuclear weapons.¹⁵³

Thirdly, the United States and Europe perceived the Iranian regime differently. The American administration perceived the Iranian regime as a bigger threat than its nuclear ambitions, and changing its behavior is insufficient because the Iranian “bad behavior is linked to” the regime “character.” The evidence was clear when the Bush administration initiated a “strategic relationship with India” in July 2005. Although India acquired a nuclear bomb in violation of the NPT, Bush claimed that India was a “responsible state” while Iran was a “rogue” state.¹⁵⁴ The United States even supported an “Iranian nuclear program” when Iran was ruled by the “Shah” before the Islamic revolution in 1979. Therefore, the American rising concerns were over the Iranian regime itself.¹⁵⁵ The Iranian regime was consistently accused by the United States of its nuclear ambitions, its support of terrorists, and its rebuff of the “Middle East peace process” and its violation of “human rights.” Conversely, the European Union consistently considered Iran as “a stabilizing regional power in the Middle East.” This perception was evident in the mutual economic relations and the critical dialogue between Europe and Iran since the beginning of the 1990s.¹⁵⁶

The European Union believed that the strategies of sanctions and intimidation weakened the 'reformists' and strengthened the radicals within Iranian society, whereas “dialogue” encouraged reformists and helped Iran to act positively in the Middle East.¹⁵⁷ Therefore, the European Union sought to alter the Iranian behavior through linking its “economy and society” to the international community as opposed to isolating it by sanctions.¹⁵⁸ Those transatlantic divergences over the perception of the Iranian regime illustrated the differences between the transatlantic partners; whereas the United State would have taken a softer stance towards Iran if

¹⁵² Kutchesfahani, “Iran's Nuclear Challenge,” 5.

¹⁵³ Litwak, “Living with Ambiguity: Iran and North Korea,” 102.

¹⁵⁴ Ibid., 94.

¹⁵⁵ Zakharchenko, “EU and U.S. Strategies against Terrorism and WMD,” 29.

¹⁵⁶ Skiba, “Transatlantic Relations and Rogue States,” 7.

¹⁵⁷ Tzogopoulos, “Evolution of US and EU Policy towards Iran,” 43.

¹⁵⁸ Mark Leonard, “Can EU Diplomacy Stop Iran's Nuclear Programme?.” (Working paper, Center for European Reform, November 2005), 17.

the regime had been supportive of the American interests, Europe would have focused on protecting the NPT regime. This has been eloquently commented on by Bruno Tertrais:

Many in Washington would see Iran's nuclear program as a much less important concern if its regime became a pro-Western one; but for the Europeans, the problem would be almost unchanged, in particular as it relates to the future of the NPT.¹⁵⁹

Therefore, one of the core European reasons to strongly interfere in the Iranian crisis and diverge with the United States' approach was the far-reaching European desire to strengthen the “multilateral arms control regimes in general and the NPT in particular,” and to strengthen the role of the United Nations through the IAEA to address the proliferation of WMD. For Europeans, the best tool of influence was to practice their effective multilateralism doctrine against the American vigorous propensity to unilateralism and military force in international affairs, because the Bush doctrines heavily jeopardized the status of international law and undermined the United Nations.¹⁶⁰

Fourthly, economic and “unique” ties between Europe and Iran partially explained the lenient European approach towards Iran, compared to the United States' severance of relations with Iran since 1979.¹⁶¹ While the United States avoided to rely on Iran to secure its “oil imports” and has depended instead on the other Arab Gulf states since the 1990s, the European Union depended heavily on Iranian energy supplies. In addition, economic and technological trade and European investments in the Iranian energy sectors reached a high point in Iran, particularly with the big member states such as Germany, France, and Italy.¹⁶²

- Neo-Liberalist Reasons of Transatlantic Divergence over Iran (2002-2005)

The neo-liberalist reasons behind transatlantic divergences over Iran's nuclear issue are as follows: Firstly, domestic backdrop in the United States and in the big European member states was critical for the explanation of the transatlantic divergences over Iran. As for the United States, the neoconservatives dominated the first Bush administration's agenda. They sought to remap the Middle East region and to “democratize” its regimes and most importantly to change

¹⁵⁹ Tertrais, “The Iranian Nuclear Crisis,” 34.

¹⁶⁰ Seaboyer, “EU-3 and the Iranian Nuclear Program,” 105-106.

¹⁶¹ Anastasia Th. Dreno, “Iran: Caught Between European Union- United States Rivalry?,” in: *Iran's Foreign Policy: From Khatami to Ahmadinejad*, eds. Anoushiravan Ehteshami and Mahjoob Zweiri (United Kingdom: Ithaca Press, 2008), 74.

¹⁶² Tzogopoulos, “Evolution of US and EU Policy towards Iran,” 17-22.

the antagonistic regimes by force. Iran was second on the American list of regimes that should disappear after Iraq.¹⁶³

Yet, conflicts were evident within the Bush administration between the 'hawks' and the 'doves' over the best way to address the Iranian nuclear crisis. Whereas the hawks, mainly Secretary of Defense Rumsfeld and Vice-President Richard Cheney, pressed for the inevitability of “regime change” by force or even by supporting the Iranian opposition, the doves, mainly the Secretary of State, pushed for “engagement and rapprochement.”¹⁶⁴ That split within the Bush administration over the ultimate objective - the hawks aiming at toppling the Iranian regime and the doves aiming at altering its behavior - caused vagueness in the American policy against Iran at that time.¹⁶⁵ This ambiguity was reflected in the American reaction to the European initiative and the Tehran agreement in the late 2003. Whereas Colin Powell expressed that it was a step forward, the ‘White House, the National Security Council and the Pentagon’ abstained from giving any support to the European endeavor until the beginning of 2005.¹⁶⁶

To put it accurately, Iran was in a crux, stuck between Vice President Dick Cheney and Secretary of Defense Donald Rumsfeld on the one hand and Secretary of State Colin Powell on the other hand. Cheney, as the leader of the hawks and the key powerful figure in the first Bush administration, worked in collaboration with Rumsfeld, Paul Wolfowitz (Deputy Secretary of Defense), Douglas Feith (Undersecretary for Policy at the Pentagon), and John Bolton (Under Secretary of State for Arms Control) to overthrow the Iranian regime as the only workable resolution to the troubles the United States faced in the Middle East. They even pushed for a change from within the regime through various tools which ranged from sustaining the Iranian opposition at home and abroad and keeping the military option on the table, to launching clandestine assaults against the Iranian government. On the other side, Powell, as the head of the doves, worked with Richard Armitage (Deputy Secretary of State), and Lawrence Wilkerson (the Chief of Staff) to resist the intent to get rid of the Iranian regime because this operation was beyond the reach of the US and held unbearable costs. As an alternative, the doves called for cooperating with the European partners and the other global powers such as Russia and China to

¹⁶³ Sabet Shahriar Saeidi, “Iranian-European Relations: A Strategic Partnership,” in: *Iran's Foreign Policy: from Khatami to Ahmadinejad*, eds. Anoushiravan Ehteshami and Mahjoob Zweiri, (United Kingdom: Ithaca Press, 2008), 56.

¹⁶⁴ Zaborowski, “Bush's Legacy and American's Policy,” 63-64.

¹⁶⁵ Litwak, “Living with Ambiguity: Iran and NorthKoria,” 103.

¹⁶⁶ Harnisch, “Minilateralisms: the EU-3 Initiative Vis-à-vis Iran ,” 96.

stop Iran's nuclear activities. Condoleezza Rice, National Security Advisor, was stuck in the middle between the two camps.¹⁶⁷

It has been argued that the hawks took the lead in the first Bush administration regarding Iran's nuclear program. The first piece of evidence was that the Bush administration espoused their two guiding principles: no to talks, and yes to regime overthrow.¹⁶⁸ The second piece of evidence was the American refusal of the Iranian proposal to settle the tensions with the United States, which was a direct result of the hawks' objection to talk to Iran as it would provide legitimacy to the Iranian regime. The third piece of evidence was the American negative response towards the Tehran agreement between Europe and Iran, particularly by John Bolton, who pushed for the sanctions alternative through his vigorous attempts to send the case to the Security Council.¹⁶⁹ Indeed, Bolton expressed his disdain for the European Union's "incentives and sticks approach," when he answered a query saying "I do not do carrots."¹⁷⁰ The fourth piece of evidence were mounting deliberations within the American administration in 2004 about the strategies, ways, and plans to launch a military assault against Iran, accompanied by intense criticism of the EU3 initiatives because they were too appealing to pressure Tehran.¹⁷¹

As for the European Union, a "learning effect" of the transatlantic and European splits over Iraq was the guiding factor to get decisively united and prevent another dangerous rift over Iran. The British government under Blair, the closest European ally to the United States, could not afford another public discontent like the one caused by the Iraq war in 2003. Additionally, the three big European states found the Iranian case the last salvation to the almost damaged CFSP following the war against Iraq.¹⁷² Therefore, the EU3 initiative was considered a chance to consolidate the CFSP and at the same time to give concrete evidence that the European continent has "overcome" its divisions. Furthermore, the three European governments had their own political and economic reasons to initiate a diplomatic course as an alternative to the American propensity to isolate and oust the Iranian regime. Politically, Germany wanted to assert its status and reputation as a leader in addressing international threats. This reputation would give Germany more credentials for its ambitious goal to acquire a permanent seat at the Security

¹⁶⁷ Skiba, *the Bush Administration's Iran Policy*, 44-46.

¹⁶⁸ Seaboyer, "EU-3 and the Iranian Nuclear Program," 112.

¹⁶⁹ Skiba, *the Bush Administration's Iran Policy*, 48-50.

¹⁷⁰ Litwak, "Living with Ambiguity: Iran and North Korea," 104.

¹⁷¹ Skiba, *the Bush Administration's Iran Policy*, 52.

¹⁷² Goldthau Andreas, "Divided over Iraq, United over Iran: A Rational Choice Explanation to European Irrationalities," *European Political Economy Review* 8 (2008):42-43.

Council. The French government has always sought a stronger and global role for the EU in international affairs and Iran was an opportunity to do so. Britain yearned for healing the transatlantic rifts caused by the Iraq war as well as restoring its damaged political weight within the European Union.¹⁷³

Economically, the lofty benefits and investments of big European firms in Iran partially explain the European tendency to prefer dialogue rather than sanctions.¹⁷⁴ It is not a secret that French, German and Italian firms hold enormous investments in the Iranian economy.¹⁷⁵ If we acknowledge that France is the biggest European trade partner of Iran, Germany the largest EU exporter to Iran, and Italy a basic importer of energy supplies from Iran, we can understand the European states' position insisting on dialogue and economic incentives.¹⁷⁶

- Constructivist Reasons of Transatlantic Divergence over Iran (2002-2005)

To fully grasp transatlantic divergences over Iran, values and identities of the transatlantic partners that shape their policies towards Iran should be considered. The different historical experiences of the EU and the United States partially explain their differences in values, which plays a significant role in identifying their policies. For Europeans, the history of the European integration process, which was mainly based on negotiation, dialogue and multilateralism, has shaped the European political identity. Therefore, any attempt for unilateralism in international affairs defies the European identity and values.¹⁷⁷ Unlike Europe, the United States' historical experience in World War II and in the Cold War taught a big lesson that power and material force was indispensable to achieve victory in any confrontation.¹⁷⁸

Additionally, both Europe and the United States have different historical experiences with respect to Iran. These different experiences shaped both the American and the European minds in addressing the Iranian nuclear program. For 30 years, following the Iranian Islamic revolution, the United States developed a deep-rooted negative image of Iran as rogue state, while Europe has had a profound economic and political engagement with Iran since the 1980s and positively regarded Iran as a momentous state in the Middle East; and more importantly, it

¹⁷³ Seaboyer, "EU-3 and the Iranian Nuclear Program," 106-107.

¹⁷⁴ Zakharchenko, "EU and U.S. Strategies against Terrorism and WMD," 31.

¹⁷⁵ Leonard, "Can EU Diplomacy Stop Iran's Nuclear Programme," 17.

¹⁷⁶ Tzogopoulos, "Evolution of US and EU Policy towards Iran," 22.

¹⁷⁷ Sonia Lucarelli, "Values, Identity and Ideational Shocks in the Transatlantic Rift," *Journal of International Relations and Development* 9, no. 3 (2006): 313-314.

¹⁷⁸ Tuomas Forsberg and Graeme P. Herd, *Divided West: European Security and the Transatlantic Relations* (The Royal Institute of International Affairs: Chatham House, 2006), 30.

gave a larger consideration to the domestic dynamics within Iranian political scene than the United States did.¹⁷⁹

In addressing the Iranian nuclear crisis, both the United States and Europe summoned their historical background in international affairs and their past relationships with Iran. The United States continued to perceive Iran as an unconstructive ingredient in the Middle East security equation, an animate adversary to Israel, a stumbling block to the American broader Middle East strategy and most importantly pursuing WMD,¹⁸⁰ while the European Union continued to believe that Iran could be persuaded to abandon its nuclear ambitions through political dialogue, economic inducements and support to the reformists within Iranian society.¹⁸¹

▪ Reasons of the Transatlantic Convergence over Iran (2005-2009)

• Neo-Realist Reasons of Transatlantic Convergence over Iran (2005-2009)

From the outset of 2005, transatlantic policies regarding Iran noticeably converged. The American posture softened and the European stance hardened, which was attributable to different reasons. The American softer stance can be explained by the increasingly shrinking of its hard and soft power; the unbearable cost of the military option against Iran, and the growing Iranian regional power vis-à-vis the United States. To put it specifically, by the end of 2004 the United States was faced by a striking quandary and military overstretch in both Iraq and Afghanistan, accompanied by a European reluctance to genuinely support the United States in its military operations with the exception of Britain.¹⁸² The mounting rebellion in Iraq stretched the U.S. military and economic capital needed to contain the insurgency and to rebuild the Iraqi institutions. Therefore, the likelihood of any American military involvement in Iran decreased and even lost its reliability that had been extremely lofty in 2003.¹⁸³

In addition, an American military strike against Tehran's nuclear sites would turn out to be a terrible substitute for many reasons. Firstly, it would not demolish the entire Iranian nuclear program but could only delay it for a short time. Secondly, it would not only cause civilian casualties but would also give “popular” support to and tighten the grip of the Iranian regime, which would be enormously motivated to speed up its nuclear program. Thirdly, the Iranian

¹⁷⁹ Saeidi, “Iranian-European Relations,” 61.

¹⁸⁰ Robert E. Hunter, “A New American Middle East Strategy?,” *Survival* 50, no.6 (2008- 2009): 51.

¹⁸¹ Zakharchenko, “EU and U.S. Strategies against Terrorism and WMD,” 30.

¹⁸² Rubin P. James, “Building a New Atlantic Alliance,” *Foreign Affairs* 87, no.4 (2008), 3, <http://faculty.maxwell.syr.edu/.../USNatSecandForeignPol/Rubin.doc.html>.

¹⁸³ Skiba, *the Bush Administration's Iran Policy*, 31.

vengeance would inevitably turn against the American troops and interests in both Iraq and Afghanistan, and the possibility of Iran closing the Straits of Hormuz would mean a direct risk to the influx of energy resources and an extreme rise in oil prices.¹⁸⁴ Fourthly, a unilateral assault against Iran would exacerbate the already undermined global status of the United States, not only because of the possible civilian victims or because of destroying historical and sacred constructions but also because it would assure to the rest of the world that American unilateralism became a rule and not an exception.¹⁸⁵

Moreover, an increasing decline of American legitimacy was noticeable in the aftermath of the American unilateral propensity that reached its zenith in the Iraq invasion. Such decline was also evident in the “annual transatlantic trends surveys” which showed a pessimistic opinion of the Europeans towards the United States.¹⁸⁶ The failure of the American administration to find WMD in Iraq, the Abu Ghareeb scandal, the American rebuff of the Kyoto protocol and the International Criminal Court in conjunction with American unilateralism and the Bush doctrine of preemption profoundly undermined the image and the attractiveness of the United States as a global power, even in the eyes of its European allies.¹⁸⁷ Furthermore, the growing regional Iranian position was toughened by the American deeds, since the United States had altered the balance equation in the Middle East, by toppling the regimes most hostile to Iran (Afghanistan and Iraq), in favor of Iran and gave Tehran a historic opportunity to project and spread out its regional sway, particularly vis-à-vis the United States interests.¹⁸⁸ This new Iranian regional status was recently expressed by Richard Hass and Martin Indyk:

The Bush administration succeeded in ousting the Taliban and Saddam Hussein, but in the process it removed Tehran's most threatening enemies and inadvertently opened the door to an Iranian bid for regional primacy.¹⁸⁹

The regional influence of Iran was highly manifested in Iraq. Iran interfered in Iraq by sustaining the Shia militias and the Shia cleric in Iraq and even fueling the militant insurgency against the US troops. Iran also blackmailed the United States and Europe by the possibility of

¹⁸⁴ Philip H. Gordon, “America, Europe, and the Nuclear Challenge from Iran,” (paper presented At V. Annual GMF U.S.-EU Think Tank Symposium, Washington, D.C., June 17-18, 2007), 2.

¹⁸⁵ Michael McFaul, Abbas Milani, and Larry Dimond, “A Win-Win U.S. Strategy for Dealing with Iran,” *The Washington Quarterly* 30, no. 1 (2006-2007): 124.

¹⁸⁶ Skiba, *the Bush Administration's Iran Policy*, 32.

¹⁸⁷ Philip H. Gordon, “The End of the Bush Revolution,” *Foreign Affairs* 85, no. 4 (2006): 79.

¹⁸⁸ Ted Galen Carpenter and Malou Innocent, “The Iraq War and Iranian Power,” *Survival* 49, no. 4 (2007-2008): 67.

¹⁸⁹ Richard N. Hass and Martin Indyk, “Beyond Iraq: A New U.S. Strategy for the Middle East,” *Foreign Affairs* 88, no. 1 (2009): 46.

blocking the ‘Straits of Hurmoz,’ which according to analysts would mean cutting off over three quarters of the oil coming from the Persian Gulf and oil prices mounting to “100\$ and even 250\$, per barrel.”¹⁹⁰ A more confident Iran also emerged as a result of climbing in oil and gas prices which resuscitated the Iranian regime and made it more defiant to transatlantic pressures regarding its nuclear program. To sum up, the solid and stubborn Iranian stance, represented by Ahmedi Negad, was a direct result of Iran's growing regional hegemony and supremacy in the Middle East.¹⁹¹ Therefore, Robert Kagan argued that Iran sought to be a regional player in the “Middle East and Persian Gulf”:

Iran defines and ennobles itself by its willingness to stand up to the United States...Iran’s nuclear program is not only about security. Like India, Iran pursues nuclear weapons to establish itself as a great power in its region and beyond.¹⁹²

The European posture turned harder towards the Iranian nuclear program and more convergent with the American position at the beginning of 2006 for numerous reasons. Firstly, Europe got tougher as a result of the increasing Iranian rejection to subsequent European proposals, particularly the August 2005 proposal, which was backed by the United States. The Iranian refusal of this proposal has led to an impasse to the possibility of finding a middle ground, as the Europeans thought. Secondly, the materialization of the Iranian hardliner President Ahmadi Negad in 2005 deliberately increased the hurdle to reach an agreement because of his unwillingness to “compromise” with regard to “Iran's nuclear” program. Into the bargain, Negad added more fuel when he doubted the “Holocaust” and threatened to wipe Israel from the map.¹⁹³

Thirdly, the flexibility of the American position and its readiness to join the European efforts with regard to Iran in the beginning of 2005 led to a more convergent European position with the United States. Therefore, transatlantic convergence materialized in the agreement to refer the case to the Security Council, particularly after the increasing Iranian defiance and its non-cooperative attitude.¹⁹⁴ In effect, it was argued that there was a reciprocal understanding between Europe and the United States. The United States would support European diplomatic efforts towards Iran and in return European states would promise to sustain the American

¹⁹⁰ Carpenter, “The Iraq War and Iranian Power,” 71-73.

¹⁹¹ Skiba, *the Bush Administration's Iran Policy*, 33.

¹⁹² Robert Kagan, *the Return of History and the End of Dreams* (London: Atlantic Books, 2008), 47.

¹⁹³ Saeidi, “Iranian-European Relations,” 55.

¹⁹⁴ Fitzpatrick, “Can Iran's Nuclear Capability Be Kept Latent?,” 42.

yearning to send the case to the Security Council if diplomacy failed, paving the way for tighter sanctions against Iran.¹⁹⁵

At the beginning of 2006, an even stronger transatlantic convergence materialized following the referral of the Iranian nuclear issue to the Security Council. However, Russia and China, as global players, came into the game with Europe and the United States. Russia and China opposed tougher sanctions on Iran. Both the United States and Europe had to make concessions concerning the three resolutions against Iran to ensure unanimity in the Security Council. Therefore, a transatlantic awareness of challenging and rising “authoritarian powers” has served as a unifying factor between Europe and the United States with respect to Iran.¹⁹⁶

While the United States was preparing the international scene for tougher sanctions and even for a military option against Iran, the National Intelligence Estimate (NIE) was released by the end of 2007. The report confirmed that Iran would not be able to get a nuclear bomb until 2015. Consequently, the second Bush administration’s endeavor to guarantee international support for tougher sanctions or even for a military strike against Iran was substantially undermined. In addition, Russia and China used the report as an excellent pretext in order not to cooperate with the United States and Europe in the Security Council with regard to Tehran.¹⁹⁷ Moreover, President Sarkozy, who was very inclined to support tougher European sanctions against Tehran, had to soften his rhetoric after this report.¹⁹⁸ The report even “emboldened” Tehran and was considered an Iranian triumph over the West.¹⁹⁹

A deeper pragmatic and more principled transatlantic convergence over Iran materialized in 2008 and 2009. The reasons were not only that Obama came to power in January of 2009, bringing with him a new agenda of dialogue with Tehran, but also that the Bush administration had no alternative but to act diplomatically and in cooperation with Europe with respect to Iran during its last year in office. Three structural reasons for transatlantic convergence materialized in 2008-2009. The first was a shift from an American unipolarity to multipolarity of the international system. The second was an erosion of the American reputation and likeability

¹⁹⁵ Archick, “European Views and Policies towards the Middle East,” 19-20.

¹⁹⁶ Constanze Stelzenmuller, “Transatlantic Power Failures, America and Europe, Seven Years After 9/11: Hard Power Humbled, Soft Power Exposed, and A Looser, More Pragmatic Relationship” (Brussels Forum Paper Series, the German Marshall Fund of the United States, 2008), 18.

¹⁹⁷ Litwak, “Living with Ambiguity: Iran and North Korea,” 91-92.

¹⁹⁸ Dennis Ross, “Statecraft in the Middle East,” *The Washington Quarterly* 31, no. 3 (2008): 11-12.

¹⁹⁹ Shahram Chubin, “Iran’s Power in Context,” *Survival* 51, no.1 (2009): 169.

caused by Bush's policies. The third reason was the emergence of a pressing international financial crisis.²⁰⁰

Firstly, a rising multipolar international system came to the fore. In 2008, The US Intelligence Council released a 'report' titled "Global Trends 2025: A Transformed World." The report predicted that the international system would slowly shift from an American unipolar into a multipolar system. This shift was inevitable as a result of the rise of other powers such as China and Russia, the increase of the global economy, the shift of "wealth and economic power from west to east," and the rising status of "non-state actors."²⁰¹ Broadly speaking, the report expected that the "relative economic, political and military" powers of the west (the United States and Europe) would dwindle in the near future compared to the Eastern powers.²⁰² Based on these indicators of an emergent multipolarity, "diplomacy" would turn out to be an appreciated tool, and cooperation with trusted allies would become the best option.²⁰³ Such a tendency was markedly expressed in the words of Stephen F. Szabo:

In a multipolar world, the best option for the United States is to form a closer alliance with the European Union. Europe remains the region closest to America in terms of values and interests. A true alliance...would allow the United States to share the risks and burdens as well as the responsibilities of shaping a new global order.²⁰⁴

This is precisely what the Obama administration grasped and applied with respect to Europe. From the onset of his Presidency, Obama emphasized that a "revitalized transatlantic partnership" is indispensable to addressing the global challenges in a gesture that his administration will not be unilateralist and instead will be adopting multilateralism in international affairs.²⁰⁵ As for Iran, convergence with Europe and giving negotiations with Tehran a chance would, if the talks fail, improve the United States' position to impose harsher sanctions on Iran in coordination with Europe and would also guarantee the international

²⁰⁰ Maria Sadowska and Pawel Swieboda, "Transatlantic Community- A Second Life?," (Centre for European Strategy, 3 November 2008), <http://www.girodivite.it/Transatlantic-community-a-second.html>.

²⁰¹ Barry R. Posen, "Emerging Multipolarity: Why Should We Care?," *Current History* 108, no. 721 (2009): 347.

²⁰² Stephen F. Szabo, "The Washington Bubble: Why US Foreign Policy is Oversized," *Current History* 108, no. 721 (2009): 369.

²⁰³ Posen, "Emerging Multipolarity: Why Should We Care," 351.

²⁰⁴ Szabo, "Washington Bubble: Why US is Oversized," 373.

²⁰⁵ Daniel Hamilton and Nikolas Foster, "The Obama Administration and Europe," in: *the Obama Moment: European and American Perspectives*, eds. Alvaro De Vasconcelos and Marcin Zaborowski (Paris: European Union Institute for Security Studies, September 2009), 39.

support, particularly from China and Russia, to penalize Iran.²⁰⁶ This was underlined by Christian W. Martin when he argued that “the United States will need its allies to talk Iran into giving up its nuclear program. It will need its allies even more if these efforts fail and the US attempts to increase Iran [‘s] isolation.”²⁰⁷

Consequently, one of the main reasons of transatlantic convergence over Iran was the fact that both China and Russia deliberately exploited the urgency and the magnitude of the Iranian nuclear dilemma as a bargaining chip to address their other security problems with both Europe and the United States. Because China and India have enormous economic interests in Iran, they were reluctant to impose harsher sanctions against the country, but they were mainly “hiding behind Russia at the UN and other forums.” Although Russia is not interested in a nuclear Iran, it is also not interested in reaching a quick solution to the Iranian conundrum.²⁰⁸ Markedly, this explains the Obama administration’s vigorous endeavor to improve its relations with Russia in order to strike a deal with. Where the United States would reach a compromise with Moscow on the “strategic arms,” the “missile defense” shield, and on other strategic issues, Russia would fully collaborate with the West in matters concerning both Iran and Afghanistan. Nevertheless, Russia is still reluctant to speedily resolve the Iranian dilemma and still uses it as a “bargaining chip” in its relation with the West. Yury E. Fedorov adequately portrayed the Russia position with respect to the Iranian dilemma:

Moscow has developed an approach to the Iranian issue that may be characterized as “the three noes”: no to nuclear Iran, no to military option, and no to diplomatic resolution of the problem...Russia uses Iran’s nuclear program as a trump card in its zero-sum game with the West.²⁰⁹

The second reason for transatlantic convergence was a considerable decline of the United States’ image and legitimacy as a superpower as a result of Bush’s policies for about a decade. In other words, the legitimacy of “US leadership” was highly questioned, both in Europe and in the rest of the world.²¹⁰ The de-legitimization of the American leadership has led numerous pundits to argue that the United States turned out to be a “leader” with no “followers.” For instance,

²⁰⁶ Peter Crail, “Candidates Differ on Iran, Agree on Sanctions,” *Arms Control Today* (July-August 2008), http://www.armscontrol.org/act/2008_07-08/Candidates.html.

²⁰⁷ Christian W. Martin, “Some Remarks on Transatlantic Relations after the U.S. Presidential Elections,” November 20, 2008, 4.

²⁰⁸ Giora Eiland, “Israeli’s Military Option,” *The Washington Quarterly* 33, no. 1 (2010): 118.

²⁰⁹ Fedorov E. Fedorov, “Will Moscow Help with Trouble Spots?,” *Current History* 108, no. 721 (2009): 311-312.

²¹⁰ David P. Calleo, “How to Govern a Multipolar World,” *Current History* 108, no. 721 (2009): 361.

Barry Buzan argued that, although the United States still possesses the political and the economic power for global leadership, its global legitimacy is highly undermined. Buzan adequately expressed this in the following passage:

The US will almost certainly retain sufficient material capability to play the leadership role..., but not certainly retain the will. The problem is that the legitimacy of US leadership is now severely corroded, which...creates the possibility of a leader without followers.²¹¹

A comparison of the “Transatlantic Trends Surveys” between 2002 and 2008 shows a remarkable worsening of the United States’ image in Europe. In 2002, “64%” of Europeans highly endorsed the US as a global leader. In 2008, European public support of the United States decreased to half of that and the percentage of Europeans who rejected the United States as a global leader rose to “59%.” From this perspective, Obama’s first goal to restore and renew the American leadership throughout the globe was reasonable.²¹² In that sense, the Obama administration’s inclination to multilateralism and cooperation with Europe was a tool to regain American credibility and to ask Europe to share some of the US burdens. President Obama firmly expressed that by asserting that “a more responsible and cooperative” America will look to Europe to uphold its own responsibilities on issues such as “Afghanistan, Iran, Africa, and the environment.”²¹³

The third reason for transatlantic convergence was the unprecedented international financial crisis which struck the global economy in general and the United States and Europe in particular. The crisis resulted in a “decline of American economic dominance.” This decline manifested itself in the alarming US foreign budget deficit and its national debt in 2008. Consequently, the United States turned to be increasingly reliant on the Asian countries to cover its debts and to invest in the American economy. This explained the Obama administration’s reluctance to criticize China for its human rights abuses and also the American amendments to its economic stimulus package that took Chinese interests into consideration.²¹⁴

²¹¹ Barry Buzan, “A Leader without Followers? the United States in World Politics after Bush,” *International Politics* 45, no. 5 (2008): 565.

²¹² John K. Glenn, “Foreign Policy Challenges for the Obama Administration” (European Policy Analysis, Swedish Institute for European Policy Studies, no. 1, January 2009), 1.

²¹³ Beter Rudolf, “Restoring Global Leadership: US Foreign Policy under Barak Obama” (SWP Comments 29, German Institute for International and Security Affairs, November 2008), 1-4.

²¹⁴ Szabo, “Washington Bubble: Why US is Oversized,” 369-370.

From a European perspective, Europe realized that no one state is capable of withstanding the global challenges “without allies and privileged partners.”²¹⁵ Broadly speaking, Europe was highly offended by Bush’s unilateral policies and was enthusiastic for an American multilateral approach. The Obama administration catered to the European desire by embracing “diplomacy and alliances” as guiding principles for its foreign policy. The European reception of Obama’s principles was markedly articulated in the words of Bruce Jones, who stated that ‘indeed, many view the Obama administration’s approaches to diplomacy and multilateralism as the embrace by the US of a worldview and position long held by Europe.’²¹⁶ Specifically, Europe enthusiastically welcomed Obama’s engagement approach with respect to Iran. There was a European feeling that the Bush administration did not provide a full opportunity for diplomacy in the Iranian crisis and that it instead used the diplomatic course mainly as a tool to strengthen economic sanctions against Tehran.²¹⁷

Europe was even more anxious than the United States about the changing international system that gave greater weight to the East at the expense of the West. Both Europe and the United States will represent “only 9% of the world population whereas Asia will represent half of the world population by the year 2025.” Not only has the West’s economic supremacy diminished, but the West has also shrunk politically because both Europe and the United States are not able anymore to address the international challenges alone. Iran nuclear challenge, for example, cannot be addressed anymore by transatlantic policies without the “help of Russia, China and other regional powers.”²¹⁸

If the United States global power is diminishing relative to the East, so does the European global and regional influence. Although Europe is still a global economic force, the European percentage of the world trade markedly shrunk in the 1990s. Demographically, Europeans are decreasing in numbers and getting older. Moreover, Europe imports more than half of its “oil and gas” needs from a resurgent Russia and a highly troubled Middle East. Politically, Europe is still

²¹⁵ Simon Serfaty, “No Time for a Time-Out in Europe,” *Current History* 108, no. 721 (2009): 99.

²¹⁶ Bruce Jones, “The Coming Clash? Europe and US Multilateralism under Obama,” in: *the Obama Moment: European and American Perspectives*, eds. Alvaro De Vasconcelos and Marcin Zaborowski (Paris: European Union Institute for Security Studies, September 2009), 63.

²¹⁷ Sven Biscop, “President Obama, Europe and the Middle East,” *Israel Journal of Foreign Affairs* III, no. 1 (2009): 3.

²¹⁸ Romano Prodi, et. al., “Reshaping EU-US Relations: A Concept Paper,” ed. Nicole Gnesotto, (Notre Europe, 2010), 4-5,
http://www.notre-europe.eu/uploads/tx_publication/Etude75-EU-US_Relations-en.pdf.

a dwarf and a divided continent when it comes to the European Common Foreign and Security Policy and to its influence in a rising multilateral globe dominated by Asia. Consequently, the European weakness pushes Europe to cling to the transatlantic pillar as a pretext to “shrink” its “strategic responsibilities and delegate its own regional security and global stability to the United States.”²¹⁹ The increasing threat of Europe’s marginalization in the evolving international system was described by Eberhard Sandschneider:

The actual tragedy is taking place in Europe...that Europe is overextended, that it has no clear decision-making structures, that it is unable to build political consensus or act on basic issues of global policy. European shortcomings threaten to marginalize the region.²²⁰

To conclude, both the diminishing global power of the United States and the threat of European marginalization pushed the United States and Europe towards more convergence over Iran in 2009. The Obama administration opted for diplomacy with Iran because its other alternatives were limited and constrained compared to the Bush administration in 2001 and 2002. The United States is seeking for an exit strategy in both Iraq and Afghanistan, a military option turned out to be more dangerous than before, and the American economy is in turmoil.²²¹ This rationale was highlighted in Richard Hass and Martin Indyk words:

The alternatives are even less promising. Containment and sanctions have failed to change Iran’s course. A primitive military strike on Iran’s nuclear facilities would at best delay its nuclear program for a few years while exposing Israel and U.S forces in Afghanistan and Iraq to retaliation. And there is no realistic prospect of toppling the Iranian regime.²²²

On the other hand, diplomacy was the only European alternative for addressing Tehran’s nuclear program because Europe is even weaker than before and even more dependent on Iran for its energy supplies. However, Tehran’s growing defiance of European and American proposals made Europeans more willing to impose tougher sanctions against Iran as the United States had long desired.²²³

²¹⁹ Ibid., 11-13.

²²⁰ Eberhard Sandschneider, “The Importance of Being Europe: To Remain a Viable World Power, Europe Must Regain Its Capacity to Act” (A New Transatlantic Partnership, IP.Spring 2009), 11-12, www.ip-global.org/.../2009/spring2009/.../original_109_sandschneider.pdf.

²²¹ Dobbins, “Negotiating with Iran,” 158.

²²² Hass, “Beyond Iraq: A New US Strategy,” 50.

²²³ Esra Bulut, et. al., “The EU and the World in 2009: European Perspectives on the New American Foreign Policy Agenda,” eds. Alvaro Vasconcelos and Marcin Zaborowski (ISS Report, European Union Institute for Security Studies, no. 4, January 2009), 30.

- Neo-Liberalist Reasons for Transatlantic Convergences over Iran (2005-2009)

Domestic challenges and changes in both the United States and Europe were imperative in explaining the transatlantic convergence over Iran. As for the United States, with the re-election of President Bush in 2004, a remarkable change took place in the cabinet. Most persons in leadership positions responsible for US foreign policy were replaced. It was also significant that most of the prominent ideological neo-conservative figures, who had always opted for the military option and confrontation with Iran, were replaced by pragmatic persons that opted for a diplomatic course of action and a transatlantic rapprochement with respect to Iran. The responsibility for the structural design of US foreign policy was shifted from the Pentagon to the State Department when Bush's confidante Condoleezza Rice was appointed as the Secretary of State.²²⁴ Rice embraced the idea that diplomacy should be the guiding principle in addressing the Iranian dilemma. Due to her excellent connection with President Bush, Rice managed to reverse the confrontational American position into a more diplomatic course of action without abandoning the military option. Likewise, Stephen Hadley, the National Security Advisor, envisaged that American support of the European diplomatic incentives to Tehran would motivate Iran to reach a compromise on its nuclear activities.²²⁵

Further pragmatism materialized when many of the high-ranking neo-conservatives were removed from both the Pentagon and the State Department. Paul Wolfowitz, Douglas Feith, and Lewis Libby left the Pentagon and John Bolton left the State Department. Robert Zoellick (deputy Secretary of State), Nicholas Burns (Undersecretary of State for Policy), Philip Zelickow (Counselor at the State Department), and Stephen Hadley (National Security Advisor) were instead appointed in the second Bush administration. In coordination with Rice, they believed in the vitality of rapprochement with Europe as a tool to "build international coalitions" to address the Iranian quagmire. Nevertheless, two influential hawks, Dick Cheney and Donald Rumsfeld, were still part of the administration and opted for the military option instead of diplomacy or negotiations with Tehran because this would legitimize the Iranian regime.²²⁶

This explained the fact that the United States' diplomatic course in 2005 and 2006 and its support for the European negotiating endeavor was mainly meant to convince the Europeans to

²²⁴ Skiba, *the Bush Administration's Iran Policy*, 53.

²²⁵ Seaboyer, "EU-3 and the Iranian Nuclear Program," 113.

²²⁶ Skiba, *the Bush Administration's Iran Policy*, 54.

refer the Iranian nuclear case to the Security Council once negotiations reached an impasse.²²⁷ This also explained the fact that the military option was not abandoned but was very seriously considered in 2006. For instance, In April 2006 an American plan to strike Iran was deliberately released. Yet, a new domestic constrain, the results of the Congressional elections of November 2006, bogged down and even made an American strike against Tehran less possible.²²⁸ The Republicans lost their majority within the two congressional bodies; the triumph of the Democrats seriously constrained the President's ultimate power to make decisions such as an air strike against Iran.²²⁹ In other words, "congressional financial and policy support for the President" was markedly reduced because Democrats controlled the legislative branch.²³⁰ Sebastian Harnisch explicitly referred to the Republican defeat as a reason for transatlantic convergence over Iran by stating that:

Given the mounting domestic pressure on the Bush administration after the Republican defeat in the mid-term elections (November 2006)..., a window of opportunity that may be filled by an emerging transatlantic coalition of the willing to negotiate [Iran] is still open.²³¹

The deterioration of the popularity of the Bush administration within the United States because of the quagmires in Iraq and Afghanistan and the growing budget deficit were also another domestic constrain.²³²

On the European side, a change in governments of the major European states (Germany, France and the United Kingdom) was a considerable explanation for the European convergence with the United States on many issues. Iran was at the crux of this convergence. The new German (under Angela Merkel, 2005) and French (under Nicholas Sarkozy, 2007) governments led to more transatlantic convergence over many issues including Iran.²³³ Those leaders, faced by a more defiant Iran and a failed negotiation process, tended to take harsher positions against Iran when it came to economic sanctions, which eventually meant more convergence with the United States' long-lasting desire to isolate Iran through tougher sanctions.²³⁴

²²⁷ Seaboyer, "EU-3 and the Iranian Nuclear Program," 114.

²²⁸ Zaborowski, "Bush's Legacy and American's Policy," 76.

²²⁹ Sergio Fabbrini and Daniela Sicurelli, "Brining Policy-Making Structure Back: Why are the US and the EU Pursuing Different Foreign Policies?," *International Politics* 45 (2008): 300.

²³⁰ Graeme P. Herd and Tuomas Forsberg, "Constructive Transatlantic Strategic Dissonance: Making A Virtue Out of Vice?," *International Politics* 45 (2008): 377.

²³¹ Harnish, *Minilateralism: the EU-3 Initiative vis-à-vis Iran*, 107.

²³² Gordon, "The End of the Bush Revolution," 80.

²³³ Kanet, "A New US Approach to Europe," 355.

²³⁴ Colin Dueck and Ray Taketh, "Iran's Nuclear Challenge," *Political Science Quarterly* 122, no. 2(2007): 202.

Despite the transatlantic convergence over Iran from 2006 until the end of Bush's second term at the end of 2008, the Bush administration did not converge with Europe with respect to the value of multilateralism and negotiations as the best tools to address the Iranian nuclear danger, but rather converged under the structural (realist) and domestic (liberalist) constraints described above. Europeans have always thought that the Bush administration never gave the multilateral talks with Tehran a full chance.²³⁵ Since Obama has taken office in January 2009, a more principled, pragmatic and considerable transatlantic convergence with respect to Iran materialized. The new American strategic thinking, embraced by Obama administration, was based on a "liberal multilateral conception of American leadership" and a constructive appreciation of "international institutions."²³⁶ In other words, Obama abandoned both unilateralism and the use of military force as a first option and adopted global cooperation and engagement instead to address problems. Obama's principles were identical to the crux of the European principles and values, which have always called for effective multilateralism and the use of force as a last resort. In fact, the Obama administration's priorities and foreign policy outline were even remarkably close to that of the European Security Strategy.²³⁷ Hilary Clinton, in a hearing before the US Congress, defined the major element of the new American strategy and called it the "strategy of smart power." This smart power makes use of all the ingredients of the American power (economic, political, and military) "with diplomacy as the vanguard of foreign policy."²³⁸

Such strategic thinking was soon interpreted as an American enthusiasm towards revitalizing the transatlantic partnership as a major pillar to address the global challenges. Obama's initial actions such as closing down Guantanamo, putting forward an exit strategy from Iraq, enthusiastically engaging in the Middle East peace process, and engaging Iran diplomatically were met highly receptively in Europe on the level of the European governments and the European population as well. Obama gained an enormous popularity in Europe that surpassed Bush by far. Obama was even rewarded with the Nobel Peace Prize as an emblem of

²³⁵ Biscop, "President Obama, Europe and the Middle East," 3.

²³⁶ Peter Rudolf, "US Foreign Policy and Transatlantic Security Relations after the Elections" (SWP Comments 23, German Institute for International and Security Affairs, October 2008), 1-2.

²³⁷ Vasconcelos, "Introduction-Responding to the Obama Moment," 11-15.

²³⁸ Lars Berger, "Between New Hopes and Old Realities: the Obama Administration and the Middle East," *Orient II* (2009):28.

European enthusiasm for his global agenda and his multilateral approach.²³⁹ However, Obama's multilateralism meant that the United States was more willing to listen, consult, and even respect Europeans but at the same time it asked them for burden sharing in all the challenging issues, including Iran.²⁴⁰ However, this did not prevent Marcin Zaborowski to conclude after one year of the Obama presidency that more transatlantic convergence materialized:

The main priorities of the EU and the US are now reconcilable and, with public opinion in Europe much more favorable to the new US administration, European governments are in a position to work closely with the US in an altered political climate.²⁴¹

Another reason for transatlantic convergence over Iran and the other issues in the Middle East is the cabinet President Obama has chosen to work with. It has been argued that his national security team was pragmatic in its attitude to find results.²⁴² The economic crisis in the United States was another constraint on the country's foreign policy. Obama faced the "worst economic crisis since the Great Depression of the 1930s" and he had to cooperate with Europe and with the rising Asian powers to address it.²⁴³

²³⁹ Hamilton, "Obama Administration and Europe," 39-41.

²⁴⁰ Rudolf, "Restoring Global Leadership," 3-4.

²⁴¹ Zaborowski Marcin, "Capitalizing on Obamamania: How to Reform EU-US Relations?," in: *The Obama Moment: European and American Perspectives*, eds. Alvaro De Vasconcelos and Marcin Zaborowski (Paris: European Union Institute for Security Studies, September 2009), 229.

²⁴² Geleenn, "Foreign Policy Challenges for Obama," 2.

²⁴³ Larrabee, "Obama's Foreign Policy: Opportunities and Challenges," 3.

Conclusion

The Iranian nuclear question has always been and is still a transatlantic quagmire. A nuclear Iran would be disastrous to both the United States and Europe. A nuclear Iran would subvert the strategic equilibrium in the Middle East and would drag the region into an inevitable arms race and consequently would undermine the Non-Proliferation Treaty. A nuclear Iran would also embolden the Iranian regime to defy and even hurt Western interests in the Middle East. Further, it would present an existential threat to Israel as the West's strongest ally in the region. Since the eruption of a potential nuclear Iran in 2002 and until today, transatlantic policies witnessed two phases. The first phase (2002-2005) was characterized by a transatlantic divergence over the appropriate tool but never over the ultimate goal. The second phase (2005-2009) witnessed two stages of transatlantic convergence: the first (2005-2008) was a pragmatic transatlantic convergence and the second (2008-2010) was a principled and pragmatic transatlantic convergence over Iran.

As for the first phase (2002-2005), it can be argued that out of their common concerns and fears, both Europe and the United States pursued divergent tools in addressing the potential Iranian threat. While the first Bush administration adopted isolation and regime change as a guiding code, Europe espoused engagement and negotiations. Many reasons have been envisaged for that transatlantic divergence. Neo-realist reasons revolved around the different European and American views of the usefulness of international law and international institutions to resolve the Iranian dilemma. The relative power of the United States during this time was also an explanatory factor. The United States' feeling that the country is a hyper power encouraged the Bush administration to refuse the European negotiation approach and instead to practice its military power and its isolation policy in order to topple the Iranian regime.

On the other hand, Europe's engagement approach emanated mainly from the European fear of a repetition of the Iraq model with respect to Iran and of another split between European states and the United States that would completely undermine the transatlantic alliance. In addition, the European and American outlook on the Iranian regime widely differed. The European Union was interested in changing the behavior of the Iranian regime and the domestic dynamics in Iran, whereas the Bush administration was deeply interested in changing the regime itself. Moreover, Europe had always opted for strengthening the role of the United Nations through the IAEA to address the proliferation of WMD and felt that the American approach

regarding Iran undermines both the international law and the United Nations. Furthermore, unlike the United States, which had had no economic relations with Iran for more than a century-quarter, European states had numerous economic binds with Tehran.

Neo-liberalist reasons revolved around the domestic dynamics in both the United States and Europe. As for the United States, the first Bush administration was heavily dominated by the neoconservatives, who enthusiastically urged regime change and isolation of Iran. A domestic clash took place between the hawks and the doves within the first Bush first administration and resulted in a decisive triumph of the hawks and their isolation and non-negotiation approach with respect to Iran. As for the European Union, the British government could not bear more public dissatisfaction over a new transatlantic discord over the Iranian nuclear threat. Although the European Union used the Iranian issue to reinforce the damaged European Common Foreign and Security Policy, the three big European states had their domestic rationales and motives to move swiftly towards negotiation. The German government sought for a global assertive role and a permanent seat in the Security Council, the French government sought for a more robust international clout, whereas the British government aspired to re-establish its undermined credibility within the European continent and to heal the transatlantic rifts after the war in Iraq. European economic investments and interests in Iran also explained the European diplomatic and negotiating attitude towards Iran.

Constructivist reasons revolved around the different historical experiences of both the European Union and the United States, which identified their different values and identities. Europe's recent history is based on the European integration process that highly appreciates negotiation, dialogue and multilateralism, while the United States' recent history is based on the fact that material power is crucial to accomplish American interests. In addition, both Europe and the United States had different historical experiences with Iran. Unlike the United States, which has perceived Iran as a rogue state for more than thirty years, Europe perceives it as a momentous state in the Middle East and as a regional power to be reckoned with.

The second phase (2005-2009) witnessed a pragmatic transatlantic convergence. In its first stage (2005-2008), a pragmatic transatlantic convergence materialized: the United States turned out to be softer and Europe turned out to be harder, and the Iranian dilemma turned into a bargaining game among global powers in the Security Council. Reasons for this transatlantic convergence at this stage were numerous.

Three structural neo-realist reasons for the American convergence with Europe revolved around the overstretched American military in both Iraq and Iran, the intolerable and perilous ramifications of a military strike against Tehran, and the rising and defiant regional power of Iran. As for the European Union's convergence with the United States, the reasons revolved around the Iranian growing defiance and rebuff of the subsequent European initiatives backed by the United States. In addition, there was an increasing antagonistic and uncompromising Iranian rhetoric with regard to the Iranian nuclear crisis. This was highly represented in the deeds and words of the Iranian hardliner President Ahmadinejad since he came to office in 2005 until the present. Moreover, when the United States announced in 2006 that it was ready to fully back the European negotiating endeavor and to even join the talks, Europeans heavily converged with the United States. It can be argued that an implicit accord was struck between Europe and the United States: the United States would support the European diplomatic efforts; in return Europeans would support the American desire to refer the Iranian case to the Security Council if talks do not succeed.

The Iranian crisis turned out to be a bargaining game among the global powers within the Security Council from 2006 until the present. While both Europe and the United States converged and attempted to impose tougher sanctions against Iran, China and Russia abstained as a result of deeply-rooted political and economic relations with Tehran. However, the American and European efforts were also incapacitated because of the release of the National Intelligence Estimate (NIE) at the end of 2007. The report stated that Iran would not be able to have a nuclear capacity until 2015 and consequently there was no excuse for a rushed military attack or even for tougher sanctions against Iran. China and Russia saw that report as an alibi for not accepting further sanctions against Iran. Both countries even used the Iranian card as a bargaining chip in their relations with Europe and the United States.

A second stage of a principled and pragmatic transatlantic convergence over Iran materialized from 2008 to 2009. As for the United States, three more structural constraints were behind the American convergence with Europe with respect to Iran. The first was the fact that the global system and the center of gravity were moving away from the West to the East. The second was the fact that the American legitimacy and its well-known soft power as a benign power were wearing away as a result of the two Bush administrations. The third reason was the fact that an international financial crisis, similar to the Great Depression of the 1930s, struck the

world economies heavily and that the United States was the most affected country. As for Europe, European governments realized that a strong transatlantic alliance is the only way to address the increasing Iranian threat. Europe is still a global economic power, but on the political level a fear of marginalization arose with the indicators that its economic and political clout was declining worldwide.

As for the neo-liberalist reasons for transatlantic convergences over Iran (2005-2009), it can be argued that the first stage (2005-2008) witnessed domestic challenges and changes within both Europe and the United States that affected their policies with respect to Iran. In the United States, there was a noteworthy change in the staff of the second Bush administration. Many prominent figures of the ideological neo-conservatives were replaced by more pragmatic officials under the auspices of Condoleezza Rice. Rice was behind giving diplomacy more weight in the foreign policy of the second Bush administration. Consequently, a more transatlantic convergence became visible. Nevertheless, two influential hawks remained in the second Bush administration (Dick Cheney and Donald Rumsfeld) and pushed for a direct armed confrontation with Iran. However, by the mid of 2006, the Republican Party lost its majority in Congress. As a result, the Bush administration was deeply constrained and threat of a double military strike against Iran waned. In addition, the situation was worsened by the fading popularity of the Bush administration because of the upheavals in Iraq and Afghanistan and the mounting budget deficit. As for Europe, changes within both the French and the German governments led to more transatlantic convergences over Iran.

The second stage (2009-2009) witnessed a principled transatlantic convergence over Iran. This was because Obama embraced the multilateralism long desired by the Europeans as a guiding principle in his foreign policy. Although the second Bush administration turned to a more multilateral approach, the Europeans remained skeptical about his unilateralist tendencies. Obama, on the other hand, made it clear that unilateralism has no place in addressing the Iranian crisis and even asked the Europeans for more burden-sharing. Obama's agenda and personality became highly popular with both the European governments and the European publics. In addition, his cabinet members were mostly well-known for their pragmatism as well as their willingness to revitalize the transatlantic partnership as a way to address the mounting Iranian crisis.

Chapter Five:

A Leader- Follower Pattern, With Divergent Perceptions: Transatlantic Policies and the Israeli-Palestinian Conflict

Europe remain[s] a “hobbled giant, distracted by internal bickering and competing national agenda”....In many Economic areas, notably trade and regulatory policy, the European giant engages with the US as an equal. Yet in foreign and defence policy the relationship remains one of patron and client.

In this statement, both Jeremy Shapiro and Nick Witney illustrated the assessment of the “US National Intelligence Committee in 2008” of the globe in 2025 arguing that the standard blueprint that characterized the transatlantic relationship was that Europe did not only endorse the American leadership but was also enthusiastic for it. Therefore, the pattern was that United States continuously asked for Europe’s political sustain for its foreign policies, whereas Europe regularly called upon the United States to be simply consulted.¹ The Israeli-Palestinian conflict was no exception of such pattern of US leadership and Europe’s support and follow, albeit if there were little divergences that occasionally emerge on the surface and sooner fade away. Although a final resolution of the Palestinian-Israeli conflict has been and yet a European strategic “priority,” the United States has also always considered itself the sole mediator in the conflict albeit with marginal European economic involvement under the full auspices of the United States.²

¹ Jeremy Shapiro and Nick Witney, “Towards a Post-American Europe: A Power Audit of EU-US Relations” (European Council on Foreign Relations, London, November 2009), 23-24.

² Costanza Musu, “The EU and the Middle East Peace Process: A Balance,” *Studia Diplomatica* LX, no. 1 (2007): 11.

▪ Introduction:

Retrospectively, the chapter firstly gives a historical fleeting look at the transatlantic involvement in the Palestinian-Israeli conflict. The historical backdrop emphasizes that the United States had the upper hand in the conflict and that Europe was merely attempting to be a complementary albeit if it had an advanced declaratory policy toward the conflict. Secondly, the chapter divides the transatlantic conduct towards the Palestinian-Israeli conflict into three stages; in the first stage from 2000 until 2005, the United States disengaged at the core and Europe involved at the margin. In this stage, the chapter discusses the Bush administration's hands-off policy with respect to the conflict at the beginning of its term, followed by a rhetorical re-engagement in the background of its war against terrorism.

Simultaneously, the chapter sheds light on the marginal European involvement in the conflict that was highly manifested in the Quartet, the Road Map, and the Gaza disengagement. In the second stage from 2006 until 2008, the United States involved more in the conflict and Europe was more engaged.

A further transatlantic convergence materialized in this stage, in the aftermath of the Hamas's victory in the Palestinian legislative elections in 2006 and the Palestinian division between Hamas in Gaza and Fatah in the Western Bank in 2007. With the Annapolis conference in 2007 and Gaza war 2008-2009, the chapter argues that a leader (US)-follower (EU) model was a remarkable characteristic of the transatlantic relations.

In the third stage from the end of 2008 until the end of 2009, known as Obama's era, the chapter argues that a more transatlantic convergence materialized with the new American aggressive engagement towards the conflict along with Europe's support. Thirdly, the chapter separately gives neo-realistic, neo-liberal and constructivist explanations of the transatlantic policies towards the conflict in the Bush's era (2000-2008) followed by, realistic and liberal rationales behind Obama's aggressive engagement policy towards the conflict and Europe's support and a conclusion in the last part.

▪ Transatlantic Involvement in the Israeli-Palestinian Conflict: A Historical Glimpse

Historically, American leadership and European complementary role regarding the Israeli-Palestinian conflict have been indisputable landmarks of transatlantic relations. It can be argued that these landmarks are still and will be the guiding principles of transatlantic policies with regard to the conflict for years to come. Put simply, from the outset of the Israeli-Palestinian standoff, after the declaration of the Israeli State in 1948, France used to be the chief supporter of Israel, whereas the United States took a more balanced position. This American position resulted largely from its heavy dependency on Arab petroleum as well as from its desire to restrain the Soviet influence in the Middle East. Nevertheless, following the Six-Days War in 1967, the United States has taken a full lead in the endeavors to resolve the conflict and has become Israel's primary supporter, while France has tended to be pro-Arab and pro-Palestinian.³

The European Community had no common foreign policy until 1970. In that year, the European Community endorsed an “intergovernmental” tool called the “European Political Cooperation” to handle international issues of the Community. Nevertheless, this European Political Cooperation was a “declaratory” rather than a real device. In other words, until the Madrid accords in 1991, the European Community and its member states' positions did not rise above declaratory statements with respect to the Palestinian-Israeli conflict. The first European declaration with respect to the conflict was made in 1973. The reason was the 6 October war when the Arab states imposed an “oil embargo” against the European states. As a result, the European Community announced its support of the “legitimate rights of the Palestinians” and to the UN mandate number 242, which backed the Palestinians right to have their own state. The European declaration was perceived negatively by the United States.⁴

Nevertheless, the Venice Declaration in June 1980 represented the prevalent official European policy with regard to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. Both the United States and Israel ultimately rejected the European declaration, because it called for the “Palestinian right of self-determination” and the recognition of the “Palestinian Liberation Organization” as a partner in the “negotiation” process. Nevertheless, the Venice declaration symbolized Europe's desire to

³ Helmut Hubel, “The Israeli-Palestinian Conflict in the EU-US Relationship,” in: *German and American Perspectives on Israel, Palestine, and the Middle East Conflict*, eds. Erlanger Steven et.al. (American Institute for Contemporary German Studies, the Johns Hopkins University, AICGS German-American Issue, no. 06, 2006), 30.

⁴ Meliha Benil Altunisik, “EU Foreign Policy and the Israeli-Palestinian Conflict: How Much of an Actor,” *European Security* 17, no. 1 (2008): 106- 107.

play a bigger role in the conflict.⁵ The Declaration endorsed the Israeli right to exist and to be secured, but it simultaneously acknowledged that the Palestinian dilemma was about people who strive for their “self determination” and not just a problem of “refugees” as both Israel and the United States proclaimed. Furthermore, the declaration delegitimized the Israeli settlements on Palestinian territories and even denounced the one-sided Israeli measures to revise the sights of Jerusalem into Jewish through accelerating the settlement activities there. This declaration underscored the transatlantic “divergence” over the Palestinian-Israeli conflict from the outset. Since both the United States and Israel perceived the European Community as pro-Palestinians and prejudiced against Israel, they consequently rejected any European involvement in the conflict.⁶

Attributable to the American and Israeli refusal of any European involvement in the political process, the European Union was not invited by the United States to participate in the inception of a peaceful course of action at the 1991 Madrid and 1993 Oslo talks. In other words, the United States dominated the peace process from A to Z.⁷ In the aftermath of the Oslo accord, the European Union instead on getting directly involved in the negotiation process: sought to provide a suitable atmosphere for a permanent resolution of the conflict through “economic and financial” contributions, particularly to the Palestinians.⁸ In its pursuit for establishing a Palestinian state as a guarantee for Israel's security and parallel to its declaratory policy, the European Union highly sustained the American leadership of the negotiations between the two conflicting parts and worked vigorously to establish efficient Palestinian institutions and a reinforced economy as a prerequisite to a “viable Palestinian state.” Unquestionably, the EU has been and still is the largest “donor” to the Palestinians.⁹

On the other hand, the successive US administrations have always intentionally rebuffed any autonomous European political involvement in the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. They only

⁵ Markus Kaim, “Complementarity, Not Competition- the Role of the European Union in the Middle East Peace Process,” in: *Conflicts in the Greater Middle East and the Transatlantic Relations*, eds. Helmut Hubel and Markus Kaim (Baden-Baden: Nomos Verlagsgesellschaft, 2004), 31-34.

⁶ Altunisik, “EU and the Israeli-Palestinian Conflict,” 106.

⁷ Lena Korlarska-Bosinska and Magdalena Mughrabi, “New EU Member States' Policy towards the Israeli-Palestinian Conflict: the Case of Poland” (Research paper, the Institute of Public Affairs and Regional Center of Conflict Prevention in Amman in the Frame of the EuroMeSCo Project, no. 69, 2008), 11.

⁸ Muriel Asseburg, “From Declarations to Implementation? the Three Dimensions of European Policy towards the Conflict,” in: *the European Union and the Crisis in the Middle East*, ed. Martin Ortega (Chaillot paper no. 62, European Union, Institute for Security Studies, July 2003), 11-12.

⁹ —, “European Conflict Management in the Middle East: Towards a More Effective Approach” (SWP Research paper, German Institute for International and Security Affairs, Carnegie Endowment, Berlin, February 2009), 29.

welcomed European economic assistance and political support for its proposals to resolve the conflict as long as it did not contradict the US dominating role and its political ends. In other words, the United States monopolized the political process and accepted a European economic role only when it was consistent with and supportive of US plans and proposals, particularly concerning the financial aspect, where Europe is a spender and not an actor.¹⁰ Another decisive reason for the marginalized European political role in the Israeli-Palestinian was the ultimate Israeli refusal of any European involvement in the negotiation process. Israel has always strongly doubted Europe's impartiality because of its declarations regarding the conflict. Israel considered Europe pro-Arab and never saw it fit for a mediating role in the peace process: the United States was the sole mediating power accepted by Israel.¹¹

Therefore, with the inception of the Madrid process, a form of “division of labor” between Europe and the United States implicitly started working: The United States controls the political scene and mediates between Israel and the Palestinians, whereas the European Union reinforces the peace course through its financial tools and by crafting a suitable environment for peace through encouraging “multilateral cooperation” among the Arabs and Israelis.¹² The Euro-Mediterranean Partnership, launched in 1995, was envisioned to play a “complementary” role to the peace process as a tool to construct “confidence building measures” between the Arabs and Israelis in various spheres ranging from economic to political and security aspects.¹³ The Clinton administration was deeply engaged in the Israeli- Palestinian peace process until its last hours. Bill Clinton was convinced that vigorous negotiations under the auspices of the United States combined with the President’s personal engagement and political pressure could strike a deal. The administration even exceeded its mediation role to arbitration in an endeavor to reach a final settlement in the “Camp David II negotiations in 2000” but failed. As a consequence, the Oslo process reached an impasse by the end of 2000 and the beginning of 2001 and an outbreak of violence between Palestinians and Israeli (the Second Intifada) came to the forefront.¹⁴

¹⁰ Asseburg, “European Union and the Crisis in the Middle East,” 39.

¹¹ Kaim, “Complementarity: European Union in the Middle East,” 38-39.

¹² Ibid., 41.

¹³ Asseburg, “European Union and the Crisis in the Middle East,” 16.

¹⁴ Scott Lasensky, “Avoiding Mideast Peace? Bush, Europe, and the Israeli-Palestinian Conflict,” in: *Conflicts in the Greater Middle East and the Transatlantic Relations*, eds. Helmut Hubel and Markus Kaim (Baden-Baden: Nomos Verlagsgesellschaft, 2004), 22.

▪ **America Disengaged at the Core, Europe Involved at the Margin (2000-2005)**

From 2000 until 2002, the United States adopted a hands-off policy with respect to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict while the European Union sought to play a more political role. Transatlantic divergences at this period were clear; while Europe pushed for more American involvement in the conflict, the United States preferred a disengagement policy. Nevertheless, in the aftermath of the September 11 attacks and in the midst of the American preparations to invade Afghanistan in 2001 and Iraq in 2002, the United States rhetorically re-engaged in the conflict but within the context of its global war against terrorism. Simultaneously, the European Union was involved more politically in the conflict through its membership in the Quartet. However, the European role remained at the margin, given the American and the Israeli lack of enthusiasm for any effective European contribution. Transatlantic convergence materialized from 2002 to 2005. There was a European desire to influence the American (Road Map) plan and the Israeli (unilateral disengagement) plans pertaining to the conflict. On the other hand, there was an American desire to legitimize its policies with regard to the conflict and also to attain European support for its policies in other conflicts in the region, particularly in Afghanistan and Iraq.

• The Bush Administration: Hands Off Policy Followed by Rhetoric Re-engagement

In 2000, the Bush administration took office with different agenda and priorities from those of its predecessor. In other words, the Bush administration defined itself as the opposite of the Clinton administration, particularly in regard to the Palestinian-Israeli conflict. During its first two years, the Bush administration espoused a “hands off” policy as a guiding principle towards the Palestinian-Israeli conflict. This policy was based on two assumptions: the first was that President Clinton had engaged personally and overwhelmingly in the conflict for eight years but all his endeavors went in vain. The second assumption was that the full responsibility lied at the hands of the conflicting parties to reach a settlement, while the United States was just a facilitator in the conflict at large. This assumption was officially articulated by Secretary of State Colin Powell when he argued that the United States is a “facilitator” and that the parties at odds should reach their own resolution to the conflict.¹⁵

¹⁵ Robert O. Freedman, “The Bush Administration and the Arab-Israeli Conflict: the Record of Its First Four Years,” *Middle East Review of International Affairs* 9, no.1 (2005), 2, <http://meria.idc.ac.il/journal/2005/issue1/freedman.pdf>.

Based on those two assumptions, the Bush administration took several procedures on the ground in regard to the conflict. Firstly, it did not substitute Denis Ross when he finished his mission as a “Special Middle East Envoy in January 2001”. Secondly, it ignored the “Taba negotiations” held in Egypt at the beginning of 2001. Thirdly, it pulled out the “CIA mediation” between the two parties. Fourthly, it aligned itself with the Israeli position that Israel proposed irrefutable offer to the Palestinians in “Camp David II and at Taba” but Yasser Arafat refused a historical opportunity to settle the conflict and rebuffed peace.¹⁶ Fifthly and most importantly, once a new Israeli government, headed by Ariel Sharon, came to power on February 2001, Bush embraced and even reinforced all of its positions regarding the conflict. For instance, at the end of March 2001, the United States used its “veto” authority in the Security Council to prevent a mandate authorizing a dispatching of “a UN observer force” to Gaza and the West Bank. Even though some European states attempted to reach a middle ground, the Bush administration insisted on removing any mention of the Israeli “settlements,” the Israeli “siege” on the Palestinians, “the Fourth Geneva Convention, and the land-for-peace principle embodied in UN resolution 242”. At the end of the day, the American veto meant inaction.¹⁷

For all intents and purposes, the Bush administration strongly embraced Sharon's vision that no negotiations should be held before the Palestinians renounce violence from top to bottom. The administration even shared Sharon's conviction that the Palestinians hold great responsibility for the end of the peace process. Moreover, warm receptions of Sharon at the White House versus a rebuff to convene with Arafat were further evidence of the Bush administration's leaning towards the Israeli side. Furthermore, the Bush administration did not take exception from its preceding administrations in undermining any engagement of the “United Nations or the European Union” in the conflict.¹⁸

The Mitchell report, a request by the Clinton Administration in 2000 to a US group headed by George Mitchell to examine the reasons for the eruption of violence and suggestions to resolve the conflict, was officially published in April 2001. The report submitted a catalog of conditions for both sides to restart peace talks. It called for a complete stop of violence, a direct

¹⁶ Ibid., 2-3.

¹⁷ Kathleen Christison, “All Those Old Issues: George W. Bush and the Palestinian-Israeli Conflict,” *Journal of Palestinian Studies* 33, no. 2 (2004): 36.

¹⁸ Stephen Zunes, “The Bush Administration and the Israeli-Palestinian Stalemate” (Special Report, Foreign Policy In Focus, October 1, 2001), 1-2, http://www.fpiif.org/articles/the_bush_administration_the_israeli-palestinian_stalemate.html.

recommencement of “security cooperation,” and a mutual construction of trust between Palestinians and Israel. Mainly the report called upon the Palestinians to stop violence as a precondition to resume negotiations and asked Israel to put a “freeze on all settlement activity including natural growth.”¹⁹

Based on the Mitchell report, both Sharon and Arafat claimed a cessation of hostilities and Bush sent George Tenet, the CIA Chief, to support the cease-fire. However, Tent’s mission failed and a rising escalation of violence came to the forefront. Sharon embarked on an armed raid into the Palestinian occupied provinces and targeted the Palestinian political leaders. The American response was inconsistent: while Colin Powell denounced the Israeli attack, Cheney justified it, and Bush made a full-fledged end of the Palestinian violence a precondition to engage and even considered Arafat useless and not a real partner for peace.²⁰

The grim attacks of September 11 dramatically changed the priorities of American foreign policy towards the global war on terrorism. The Bush administration's focus was redirected primarily towards Al- Qaeda and the Taliban in Afghanistan, whereas the Israeli-Palestinian conflict was totally marginalized. Nevertheless, in its pursuit to form a global coalition that contained “Arab and Muslim states” to crush terrorism, the Bush administration had to rhetorically re-engage in the conflict in an implicit bargaining process with the Arab and Muslim states.²¹ Nearly 60 days after of the September 11 attacks and under serious pressure from “Tony Blair and the Arab states” to alleviate their reservations about an intended American invasion to Afghanistan, Bush sketched out his dream of a two states solution at the UN.²² Simultaneously, Bush rebuffed to hold talks with Arafat based on his belief and Sharon's proclamation that Arafat was a liability to peace. In addition, “ Hamas and Hezbollah” were listed as terrorist organizations by the Secretary of States.²³ In a further American step, “Assistant Secretary of State William Burns, and former Marine General Anthony Zinni” were assigned by Bush to accomplish a “cease-fire” but their mission proved unsuccessful. Furthermore, Israel captured a ship loaded with ammunition (Karina-A) at the beginning of 2002. By the end of March 2002, the violence escalated and Israel initiated its large-scale military incursion into

¹⁹ Robert O. Freedman, “Bush and the Arab-Israeli Conflict: the Record of the first Three Years” (Jerusalem Viewpoints, Jerusalem Center for Public Affairs, April 2004), 2.

²⁰ ____, “Bush and the Arab-Israeli Conflict: Four Years,” 4-5.

²¹ Lasensky, “Avoiding Mideast Peace,” 24.

²² Christison, “All Those Old Issues: Bush and the Palestinian Conflict,” 38.

²³ Robert, “Bush and the Arab-Israeli Conflict: Three Years,” 4.

Gaza and the West Bank in “Operation Defensive Shield.” From the outset, the Bush administration supported Israel but the Arab public and the pressing American desire to create a coalition to conquer Iraq led Bush to modify his position and asked Israel to pull out its troops from the occupied territories.²⁴

Thus, with the Bush administration's vigorous preparation for attacking Iraq it was pushed again to re-engage in the Palestinian-Israeli conflict. The transatlantic relations were already under a severe strain because of the unilateral American tendency in all its foreign policy fields, particularly with regard to Iraq and the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. In an American endeavor to alleviate the transatlantic divide over the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, and as a technique to guarantee Europe's support to the United States in Iraq, an international conference was held in Madrid under the auspices of Colin Powell.²⁵ In April 2002, the conference created a new mechanism called the “Madrid Quartet,” which encompassed the US, the EU, the UN and Russia. The principal purpose of the Quartet was to visualize and implement “a two state solution” through a collective effort from the four members.²⁶

On June 24, 2002, Bush took a further step by endorsing the two-state solution, albeit according to Israel terms. In exchange for his preaching of the two state solution, Bush called for a democratization of Palestine, an alternative Palestinian leadership, and a complete destruction of “terrorist groups” within Palestine. Whenever these conditions were fulfilled, Israel would stop its “settlement activities” and a “provisional” Palestinian state could be established.²⁷ In other words, the Bush administration postulated that democracy came first within Palestine and peace came later.²⁸

In brief, the American disengagement with respect to the Palestinian-Israeli conflict was the rule in 2000 and in 2001. However, the September attacks and the American war against terrorism drove the Bush administration to rhetorically engage in the conflict but without substance. Nevertheless, when it engaged the administration did so within the context of its

²⁴ ____, “Bush and the Arab-Israeli Conflict: Four Years,” 7-9.

²⁵ Lasensky, “Avoiding Mideast Peace,” 25.

²⁶ Costanza Musu, “The Madrid Quartet: An Effective Instrument of Multilateralism?” (paper presented at the annual meeting of the International Studies Association, 48th Annual Convention, Chicago, USA, 28 February 2007), 2, <http://www.g8.utoronto.ca/conferences/2007/musu2007.pdf>.

²⁷ Daniel. Mandel, “Try, Try, Try Again: Bush's Peace Plan,” *Middle East Quarterly* 11, no.3 (2004): 29.

²⁸ Martin Indyk, “US Strategy for Resolving the Israeli-Palestinian Conflict,” in: *Crescent of Crisis: US-European Strategy for the Greater Middle East*, eds. Ivo Daalder et.al. (Washington, D.C: The Brookings Institution, 2006), 52.

global war against terrorism and based on a belief that the democratization of the Palestinians was an indispensable prerequisite to initiate any peace negotiations. Meanwhile, Europe was pushing the Bush administration to strongly re-engage in the conflict and it also had a more political role in the conflict with the inception of the Quartet mechanism.

- Quartet, Road Map and Gaza Disengagement: European Involvement and an American Say-so

In the midst of the failure of the Oslo process and the eruption of the “second Intifada” in 2000, the European Union recognized that its financial and state building efforts were useless for setting up a valid settlement between the Palestinians and Israel. Therefore, the European Union desired to play a more political role in the Palestinian- Israeli conflict.²⁹ In 2001, European Israeli relations were highly stressed because of the Israeli assaults inside the Palestinian territories. The Israeli attacks resulted in a complete damage of the “Palestinian infrastructures” that the EU had invested in massively. The European Union attempted to halt the circle of violence diplomatically, through its High Representative of Common Foreign and Security Policy Xavier Solana and its Special envoy Miguel Moratinos, but failed due to the Israeli rejection; Israel even refused to let them to meet with Arafat.³⁰ Faced by Israeli reluctance and an American refusal, Europe was impotent to act effectively and had to acknowledge the direct command of the United States in the conflict.³¹

In effect, Europe was frustrated by the American hands off policy towards the Israeli-Palestinian conflict and by the blatant American bias towards Israel. This European frustration emanated from a European belief that the stalemate in the peace process jeopardized the Western interests in the Middle East. Therefore, Europe tried hard to re-engage the Americans in the conflict.³² This explains the European support for the Bush's declaration of the two-state solution and for the American proposal to establish a Quartet to implement Bush's vision. By joining the Quartet, the European Union sought to increase its political weight in the conflict and at the same time to put pressure on the American and the Israeli plans for resolving the conflict.³³

The Quartet was established for numerous reasons and with different motivations on both sides of the Atlantic. The Bush administration's disengagement approach at the beginning of its

²⁹ Asseburg, “From Declarations to Implementation: the European Policy,” 11.

³⁰ Musu, “Madrid Quartet: Instrument of Multilateralism,” 6.

³¹ Milton Viorst, “The Road Map to Nowhere,” *The Washington Quarterly* 26, no. 3(2003):181.

³² William Drozdiak, “Partners in Frustration: Europe, the United States and the Broader Middle East” (policy paper, the Atlantic Council of the United States, Washington D.C., September 2004), 13.

³³ Musu, “Madrid Quartet: Instrument of Multilateralism,” 6.

first term encouraged the European Union to get involved and propose an initiative, by Solana, to resolve the conflict at the “EU Gothenburg summit in June 2001”. At this summit, Solana demanded a “multilateral framework” and assured a European acquiescence to the United States as a leader of such a multilateral endeavor. Solana recommended a creation of a Quartet that encompassed four international powers: the US, the EU, Russia and The United Nations. Therefore, the Quartet was a European request based on a European acceptance of the United States' leadership in the Middle East.³⁴

However, the Quartet could not have materialized without the Bush resolution in 2002 to shift a long and stable American policy. Since 1967, this policy had always rebuffed any engagement from other major powers in the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. The Bush administration now accepted other powers to engage in the conflict under its leadership. This American shift was expressed in the words of Daniel Mandel when he pointed out that “the Quartet marked a dramatic departure from past U.S. peacemaking. Rarely has the United States sought the active involvement in its efforts at mediating the Arab-Israeli conflict.”³⁵ The September 11 attacks re-oriented the American foreign policy towards Afghanistan and Iraq and far-away from the Palestinian-Israeli conflict. However, the intense European frustrations and demands for an active American engagement in the conflict, particularly with the escalation of violence in 2002, led the State Department to seriously accept the Quartet to illustrate that the United States was still involved in the conflict as well as to gain European support for its plans in Afghanistan and Iraq. The United States considered that it “may gain something form this cooperation, but it definitely had nothing to lose from it.”³⁶

Unsatisfied with its role as a payer and not a player throughout the Oslo process, the European Union sought for a larger political role in the conflict. However, there has been a deep-rooted European belief that Europe cannot act alone and that it can only exert influence when it acts “in partnership with the US.” This explained the European support for Bush's declarations about a two-state solution and a final settlement in June 2002 and the European yearning for a multilateral framework such as the Quartet in spite of the European rejection of the American desire to change the regime in Palestine. Scott Lasensky eloquently pointed out Europe's

³⁴ Markus Kaim, “The Quartet Experience: Establishment and Results,” in: *A Hybrid Relationship: Transatlantic Security Cooperation beyond NATO*, ed. Peter Schmidt (Berlin: GmbH Verlag, 2008), 163-164.

³⁵ Daniel Mandel, “Four-Part Disharmony: the Quartet Maps Peace,” *Middle East Quarterly* 10, no. 3 (2003): 20.

³⁶ Kaim, “Quartet Experience: Results,” 165.

yearning to work closely with the United States although it objected to the American prerequisite to change the Palestinian leadership:

The...objectives Bush articulated- an end of the occupation, security for Israel, a viable Palestinian state- found a quick embrace in Europe. But...the unambiguous call for regime change, did not sit well across the Atlantic. Still, Europe chose to work with the U.S. on creating a master plan for ending violence and renewing a political process.³⁷

An investigation into the history of transatlantic policies towards the Israeli-Palestinian conflict shows that the formation of the Quartet was a transatlantic achievement. The Quartet gave the European Union a political role in addition to its long known financial responsibility in the peace process and signified that the peace process was no longer monopolized by the United States. Transatlantic political convergence materialized; where the United States supported the two-state solution, Europe embraced the American request of restructuring and democratizing the Palestinian authority. However, transatlantic divergence was still apparent over the role of the Palestinian president in the Peace Process. While Bush sought to remove Arafat out of the Palestinian Authority, the European Union considered him a democratically elected political leader. In the same vein, Europe accepted the American calls for reforming the Palestinian authority and Palestinian institutions and even creating a “Palestinian Prime Minister” as a means to control the president's power.³⁸

The Quartet sketched out a larger map for resolving the Palestinian-Israeli conflict called the Road Map. Nevertheless, Bush preceded the Road Map with his speech of June 24, 2002. In an American endeavor to bring the Quartet's vision under control, Bush put forward three conditions to reach a settlement: alternative democratized Palestinian leaders, an interim Palestinian state and a complete stop of the violence by the Palestinians as a prerequisite to any Israeli movement for peace. Hence, the Quartet was constrained by this American move and was forced to envisage a peace solution well-matched to the Bush speech.³⁹ In fact, the Quartet finalized the drafted Road Map two months after Bush's speech. Nevertheless, the Bush administration forced the Quartet to modify the plan according to the Israeli terms. The American administration even refused to release the Road Map for more than six months, based

³⁷ Lasensky, “Avoiding Mideast Peace,” 26-27.

³⁸ Dalia Dassa Kaye, “Bound to Cooperate? Transatlantic Policy in the Middle East,” *The Washington Quarterly* 27, no. 1 (2003-04): 183-184.

³⁹ Robert E. Hunter, “The Quartet Experience: A New Platform for Transatlantic Relations?,” in: *A Hybrid Relationship: Transatlantic Security Cooperation beyond NATO*, ed. Peter Schmidt (Berlin: GmbH Verlag, 2008), 179-180.

on an opinion that there would not be a settlement before the Israeli elections were held and the military combat in Iraq came to an end.⁴⁰ Even though the European Union was an active member in the Quartet and vigorously contributed to the drafting of the Road Map, the United States reviewed it by itself and overwhelmingly determined the outline.⁴¹ Eventually, the Road Map was released at the end of April 2003, concurrent with the closing stages of the main American military combat action in Iraq. In fact, the transatlantic relations were severely divided over Iraq and the United States sought to heal the transatlantic rifts by pushing for the peace process in the Middle East that the Europeans had always been yearning for.⁴²

The Road Map offered three-stages to reach a Palestinian state by the end of 2005. It put obligations on both Palestinians and Israel at the primary stage. As for the Palestinians, an unambiguous stop to fighting, intimidation, “incitement against Israel” and a halt of any assault on Israelis whether individually or collectively were essentially requested. Another innovation was the creation of the “prime minister” position with full authority over the government and control over a restructured security apparatus. On the Israeli side, Israel was asked to abstain from “deportation, attacks on civilians and the confiscation or demolition of Palestinian homes and property.” Concurrent with the Palestinians security commitments, Israel should gradually pull its troops out of the parts it occupied since the end of September 2000, “dismantle settlement outposts erected since March 2001, and freeze all settlement activity including natural growth of settlements.”⁴³

The release of the Road Map coincided with Sharon's re-election on of January 28, 2003 and Mahmud Abbas's appointment as a Palestinian prime minister on of March 18, 2003.⁴⁴ While the Palestinians accepted the Road Map plan, Bush persuaded Sharon to accept it but with fourteen Israeli “reservations” that undermined its very foundation. In June 2003, Bush invested personal capital in the conflict and held talks with both Sharon and Abbas during his visit to the Middle East. Bush even decided to dispatch a “U.S. diplomatic team in Jerusalem to monitor the implementation of the road map” and assigned Condoleezza Rice, the National Security Advisor at that time, to be “his personal representative on Israeli-Palestinian affairs.” These steps were greatly welcomed by the European Union but setbacks soon materialized. Violence erupted;

⁴⁰ Christison, “All Those Old Issues: Buah and the Palestinian Conflict,” 39.

⁴¹ Altunisik, “EU and the Israeli-Palestinian Conflict,” 111.

⁴² Lasensky, “Avoiding Mideast Peace,” 28-30.

⁴³ Freedman, “Bush and the Arab-Israeli Conflict: Four Years,” 12.

⁴⁴ Mandel, “Try, Try Again: Bush's Peace Plan,” 29.

Israel continued its construction of the security wall with only modest American criticism that did not dissuade Israel. Europeans came to the conclusion that the Bush administration embraced Sharon's position that the Road Map would not be put into real practice until the Palestinians bring violence to a complete end. In addition, the American pledge to construct a monitoring mechanism in Jerusalem proved invalid because the United States sent a “low profile” group to monitor the situation in the ground and was soon pulled out by the United States in the aftermath of the escalation of violence between the two conflicting parts.⁴⁵

Undeniably, the European frustration about the American positions towards the conflict reflects a historical transatlantic divergence over the most appropriate approach regarding the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. The “parallel approach” that puts the same pressure on each part was highly preferred by the Europeans. Besides, Europeans believed that considering the “security, political, and economic” aspects of the conflict simultaneously was the best technique to attain an enduring and permanent peace. Moreover, a feasible Palestinian state is the greatest assurance to Israel's security from the European perceptive. Conversely, the United States has always advocated the Israeli view that a complete Palestinian renouncing of violence and terrorism is a prerequisite to any “negotiations.” This American approach was further toughened in the aftermath of September 11 attacks when Sharon turned out to be the best partner to Bush in his global war against terrorism.⁴⁶ From this American perspective, the Bush administration considered that final issues such as the “borders, the settlements, and the status of Jerusalem” as “old issues” and emphasized that the spotlight should rather be on “Palestinian reform.” Therefore, the Bush administration’s understanding of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict was well recapitulated in the words of Kathleen Christison:

Palestinian violence is the source of all problems, that the occupation and other outstanding issues will somehow resolve themselves if violence ends, and that the Palestinians' grievances arise principally from their own leadership rather than from Israeli policies.⁴⁷

By investigating the genuine American and European incentives of forming the Quartet, one can argue that they were quite different. The United States, in its ongoing global struggle against terrorism, had to eradicate the roots of terrorism in the Middle East. Although the Bush administration was convinced that the road to Jerusalem comes through toppling the

⁴⁵ Kristin. Archick, “European Views and Policies towards the Middle East” (Congressional Research Service, the Library of Congress, 21 December 2005), 14.

⁴⁶ Ibid., 12-13.

⁴⁷ Christison, “All Those Old Issues: Bush and the Palestinian Conflict,” 40.

authoritarian regime in Bagdad, it had to rhetorically support the two-state solution albeit without a real substance; it also had to establish the Quartet as a tool to reduce the rising European condemnation to U.S. policies in the Middle East, to gain legality and to rally the support of the European Union and the international community in the wars in Afghanistan and Iraq.⁴⁸

On the other side of the fence, Europe had strengthened its Common Foreign and Security Policy and its European Security and Defense Policy over the last ten years and needed a chance to test its new institutional power. With the American hands-off policy it was an opportunity for Europe to fill the American vacuum albeit while endorsing the American leadership in the conflict. Given the geographical proximity of the conflict to the European continent, Europe felt more “vulnerable” to ramifications of an impasse in the Palestinian-Israeli conflict, particularly after the September 11 attacks. Therefore, Europe was enthusiastic to vigorously involve in the conflict. The best effective tool to avoid the long and historic Israeli rejection to European engagement in the conflict was through working in harmony with the United States through the Quartet.⁴⁹ Moreover, it was chance for Europe to break the extended American monopoly of the peace process as a first precedent, which meant that Europe was no longer the big bag of money but instead a real political player in conflict management.⁵⁰

However, in reality, when the Road Map was released it became clear that its implementation was not an American priority. Facts on the ground proved this argument; the American administration deliberately postponed the Palestinian elections that were due to be held in 2002 because the results would have brought Arafat back to power. The United States also expelled “the monitoring mechanism” that was endorsed in the Quartet once the Road Map was released.⁵¹

Furthermore, the Bush administration endorsed Sharon’s unilateral disengagement plan. Sharon’s disengagement plan from Gaza Strip and some settlements of the West Bank was firstly released in December 2003. On April 14, 2004, Bush enthusiastically endorsed the Israeli plan and described it as “historic and courageous” and a step forward. In the same vein, Bush delivered a contentious letter of guarantees to Sharon to facilitate the Israeli disengagement. In

⁴⁸ Hunter, “Quartet Experience: A New Platform,” 174- 176.

⁴⁹ Ibid., 177-178.

⁵⁰ Kaim, “Quartet Experience: Results,” 165.

⁵¹ Yezid Sayigh, “Putting the Israeli-Palestinian Peace Process Back on Track,” in: *Crescent of Crisis: US-European Strategy for the Greater Middle East*, eds. Ivo Daalder et.al. (Washington, D.C: The Brookings Institution, 2006), 63-64.

this letter, Bush denied two of the most controversial final settlement issues: the Palestinians' right to return and the 1967 borders. As for the Palestinian right of return, Bush claimed that the Palestinian refugees should settle in an envisaged Palestinian state and not in Israel.⁵² As for the 1967 borders, Bush asserted that facts on the ground make it impracticable for any Israeli-Palestinian settlement to be based on 1967. Norman Podhoretz adequately commented on Bush's claims with respect to the Palestinian refugees and the 1967 borders:

In light of the new realities on the ground, including already existing major Israeli populations centers, it is unrealistic to expect that the outcome of final-status negotiations will be a full and complete return to the armistice lines of 1949...It is realistic to expect that any final status agreement will only be achieved on the basis of mutually agreed changes that reflect these realities.⁵³

With this letter, Bush administration endorsed the idea that Israel should keep most of its "settlements" in the West Bank and denied the Palestinian the right of return. The European response was both an approval and rebuff. While the European states endorsed any Israeli pull-out from Gaza, they clearly disapproved of the guarantees in the Bush letter.⁵⁴ However, there were European fears that the Israeli plan to disengage from Gaza would be a substitute for the Road Map plan and that Gaza first would be Gaza last. In addition, the European Union affirmed that the 1967 borders were the basis for any Israeli-Palestinian settlement and the only negotiations possible had to be based on small changes mutually accepted by Palestinians and Israelis.⁵⁵ In an attempt of the Bush administration to alleviate Arab and the European concerns over the American letter of guarantee, Bush announced later on May 6 that the final settlement issues will be subject to negotiations between Israel and the Palestinians.⁵⁶

Despite the European reservations, both the United States and Europe endorsed the Israeli disengagement as an ingredient of the Road Map. In the Quartet meeting in May 2004 and at the June G8 summit, the disengagement plan was endorsed as well. However, at the end of September 2004, violence erupted again and Israel launched an attack on the Gaza Strip. The American position was that Israel has the ultimate right to protect itself from terrorists. The

⁵² Mandel, "Try, Try, Try Again: Bush's Peace Plan," 33.

⁵³ Norman Podhoretz, "Israel And the Palestinians: Has Bush Reneged?," *Commentary*, April 2008, 45, http://www.commentarymagazine.com/viewpdf.cfm?article_id=11276.html.

⁵⁴ Steven Everts, "The Ultimate Test Case: Can Europe and America Forge a Joint Strategy for the Wider Middle East?," *International Affairs* 80, no. 4 (2004): 670.

⁵⁵ Archick, "European Views and Policies towards the Middle East," 14-15.

⁵⁶ Mandel, "Try Again: Bush's Peace Plan," 34.

United States even used its veto power to obstruct a UN mandate that condemned Israel and described it as unbalanced because the mandate did not also condemn Palestinian terrorism.⁵⁷

Bush was re-elected for his second term in November 2004 with a fresh vision to work closely with the Europeans on all fields. The Palestinian-Israeli conflict was at the core of the European interests. After Arafat's death in November 2004 and the election of Mahmud Abass as the President of the Palestinian Liberation Organization (PLO) in January 2005, both the United States and Europe welcomed him as a moderate leader and sought to revive the Road Map once more. Also, the Europeans pressed the United States to refresh the peace process, and the new U.S Secretary of States, Condoleezza Rise, paid a visit to Israel and the Palestinian territories on February 7, 2005. Rice assigned General William Ward as “Middle East Security Coordinator” to monitor the Palestinian restructuration of its security forces and later delegated him to “mediate” and facilitate the Israeli pullout from Gaza.⁵⁸

In fact, Europe and the U.S. worked harmoniously and established a “division of labor” regarding the Palestinian security reform. Whereas the United States took over the mission of training “the gendarmerie-like National Security Forces as well as the Presidential Guard,” the European Union concentrated on “the civil police and the criminal justice sector.”⁵⁹ Israel accomplished the unilateral disengagement by “evacuating” its outposts in Gaza and “four settlements” in the West Bank by the end of August 2005, albeit kept continuous full command over Gaza's borders, sea, and air. On November 15, under American auspices, the Palestinian authority and Israel struck an accord called the “Agreement of Movement and Access,” which was mainly designed to organize the process of the goods and personals’ movements from and into the Gaza Strip under the auspices of the Palestinian Authority and with the monitoring of the European Union.⁶⁰

The Quartet, particularly the European Union, played a significant role in this agreement and highly welcomed the American involvement in the conflict. The European Union was also allowed to play a political and a security role in the agreement through sending the “EU Border Assistance Mission at Rafah”(EU BAM Rafah) to which both the United States and Israel had agreed. The 90 European personal missions were assigned to scrutinize the Rafah borders

⁵⁷ Freedman, “Bush and the Arab-Israeli Conflict: Four Years,” 14.

⁵⁸ Archick, “European Views and Policies towards the Middle East,” 15-16.

⁵⁹ Asseburg, “European Conflict Management in the Middle East,” 39.

⁶⁰ Carol Migdalovitz, “Israel-Arab Negotiations: Background, Conflicts, and U.S. Policy” (Report for Congress, Congressional Research Service, 10 April 2007), 13.

between Gaza and Egypt. It was the first ever precedent that Israel allowed the Europeans to get militarily involved in the conflict, albeit with its small-scale task.⁶¹ Accordingly, before the end of the year 2005, the European Union dispatched “two ESDP missions in the Palestinian territories: the European Coordinating Office for Palestinian Police Support (EUPOL COPPS), and EU BAM Rafah, a border assistance mission.” These two missions symbolized a growing European political role in the conflict regardless of their limited life. The EU POL was terminated after Hamas victory in January 2006, and EU BAM after Hamas seized Gaza in June 2007.⁶²

In conclusion, the Quartet was a breakthrough in principle, but it was marginalized by the United States in practice. The United States used the Quartet as a tool to restrain the EU and to keep Europe in a “subordinate status.”⁶³ The Quarter was meant to endow the United States with a political cover and legitimacy, and to give an economic support to the Palestinians through Europe. Although the Quartet encompassed four equal members, the United States took the helm in practice. The American primacy over the Quartet and the American actual goals were well-articulated in the words of Robert E. Hunter:

The very disparity of interests, engagements, influence, and ability- as well as willingness- to become engaged creates an asymmetry among the members of the Quartet such that it is not easy to see what the non-American members really bring to the table other than...some political cover and credibility for the United States, as well as resources to help a Palestinian state succeed economically.⁶⁴

The Road map, outlined by the Quartet, was very ambitious in principle. It was enthusiastically welcomed by the European Union, but Israel and the United States were more reserved and unwilling to implement all its requirements. The Israeli unilateral disengagement from Gaza was welcomed by the United States and was even considered a part of the Road Map. At first, the European Union concerned that the Israeli disengagement might undermine the Road Map plan but at the end of the day the EU endorsed the plan and attempted to capitalize on it as a tool to revitalize the Road Map. This explained the European involvement in the 2005 agreement of movement and access

⁶¹ Musu, “Madrid Quartet: Instrument of Multilateralism,” 13.

⁶² House of Lords, “The EU and the Middle East Peace Process” (European Union Committee, 26th Report of Session 2006-07, July 2007), 45.

⁶³ Sayigh, “Israeli-Palestinian Peace Process Back on Track,” 70.

⁶⁴ Hunter, “Quartet Experience: A New Platform,” 184.

▪ **America Involved, Europe Engaged: Transatlantic Convergence 2006-2008**

• Hamas Victory 2006, Palestinian Division 2007: Transatlantic Convergence

The far-reaching triumph of Hamas in the Palestinian parliamentary elections on January 25, 2006 represented a turning point in the conflict for both the United States and Europe. In fact, Hamas' victory was portrayed as a "Middle Eastern Tsunami" that was to transform the region and that was similar in its effect to the "Islamic Revolution in Iran in 1979." Although the United States and Europe supported a democratized Palestine and Europe even monitored the Palestinian election process and assured that it was free and fair, both the United States and Europe were unwilling to endorse its end results.⁶⁵ The transatlantic quandary was driven by the fact that Hamas was "democratically" elected and formed a democratic government while it was identified as a "terrorist" group by both the United States and the European Union. To escape from this predicament, the Quartet defined "three principles" that Hamas should abide by as a prerequisite to deal with and to even provide financial and political assistance to the Palestinians. The three conditions were that Hamas should recognize Israel, annihilate violence, and endorse the earlier accords between the PLO and Israel.⁶⁶ The three conditions were formulated very decisively in the Quartet's Statement on the January 30, 2006:

Future assistance to any new (Palestinian) government would be reviewed by donors against the government's commitment to the principles of non-violence, recognition of Israel, and acceptance of previous agreements and obligations, including the Road Map.⁶⁷

As a reaction to Hamas's rejection of the three principles, the EU, the US, and Israel initiated a regional and international isolation process against Hamas. Simultaneously, both Europe and the United States vigorously renewed their support of "President Abbas and the PA in the West Bank."⁶⁸ From the outset of Hamas's victory, a number of pundits anticipated a rift between the US and the EU regarding the appropriate approach to deal with Hamas. While the United States would favor to pressure Hamas to comply with the West's demands or to collapse,

⁶⁵ Bassam Tibi, "The EU Faces Culture and Religion in the Middle East Conflict," in: *German and American Perspectives on Israel, Palestine, And the Middle East Conflict*, eds. Erlanger Steven et.al. (American Institute for Contemporary German Studies, the Johns Hopkins University, AICGS German-American Issue, no. 06, 2006), 21-22.

⁶⁶ Clara Marina O'Donnell, "The EU, Israel and Hamas" (Working paper, Center for European Reform, London, April 2008), 7.

⁶⁷ Migdalovitz, "Israel-Arab Negotiations: US Policy," 14.

⁶⁸ O'Donnell, "The EU, Israel and Hamas," 7-8.

the European Union would prefer to continue its conditional financial assistance as “a carrot” for compliance and “a stick” for defiance.⁶⁹

However, this analysis proved to be problematic and a transatlantic convergence came to the forefront. The initial American response to Hamas's victory was a return to the hands-off policy with regarding to any peace negotiations combined with a “political and financial offensive” in a solemn endeavor to topple Hamas. In other words, the United States espoused “a regime change” approach against Hamas. The Bush administration's hawks, particularly “Deputy National Security Adviser Elliott Abrams” strongly recommended a military overthrow of Hamas by empowering Fatah. However, there was a noticeable dissatisfaction with the American approach among the other Quartet members, particularly the European Union. The European Union's initial response was that Hamas may take grave steps for political and financial reform and may comply with the Quartet's principles. Russia received prominent Hamas's political figures. Faced with these realities, the American strategy was customized to a “soft” coup d'état but the US never renounced its original vision of destroying Hamas.⁷⁰

Transatlantic convergence over Hamas solidified when Hamas rebuffed the Quartet's conditions. By the end of March 2006, the Quartet announced that Hamas did not comply with the three conditions. As a result, a global economic and political blockade and embargo against Hamas government went into force. Simultaneously, political and financial support to the Palestinian Presidency continued. While the European Union embraced the American approach regarding Hamas, it did not seek to oust Hamas but sought instead to persuade Hamas to comply with the Quartet's terms. The United States announced that it would impose sanctions on all banks that dealt with Hamas's government.⁷¹ Indeed, Hamas's triumph in the 2006 parliamentary elections was a “turning point” in the European policies towards the Palestinian-Israeli conflict. Although the EU conceded that the elections had been transparent, it aligned itself with the American and the Israeli position that Hamas should comply with the three principles in exchange for recognizing it as a legitimate Palestinian government and for financial support. When Hamas refused, the EU halted all of its financial assistances to Palestine. Israel even

⁶⁹ Dalia Dassa Kaye, “The Middle East and Transatlantic Relations: Where are We Heading?,” in: *German and American Perspectives on Israel, Palestine, and the Middle East Conflict*, eds. Erlanger Steven et.al. (American Institute for Contemporary German Studies, the Johns Hopkins University, AICGS German-American Issue, no. 06, 2006), 26.

⁷⁰ Yezid Sayigh, “Inducing a Failed State in Palestine,” *Survival* 49, no. 3 (2007): 13-15.

⁷¹ House of Lords, “EU and Middle East Peace Process,” 17-18.

exacerbated the situation by refusing to release the “Palestinian custom duties and taxes” which constitutes over half of the “Palestinian budget.” Based on a request of the European Commission, an innovative instrument called “Temporary International Mechanism” was launched by the Quartet to make sure that aid only went to the Palestinian Presidency, not to the Hamas government.⁷²

The American approach to overthrow Hamas was based on three elements. The first was to decisively reinforce Fatah as a counterweight to Hamas. Therefore the United States warned Fatah of a financial embargo if it endorsed Hamas calls for establishing a “national unity government.” The second element was to initiate a blockade and an embargo, and thus suffocating the Hamas government. Financial aid was brought to an end and “political contacts” were suspended when the Quartet conditions were not fulfilled. The Americans believed and clearly told the European states that “Palestinians must suffer for their choice” so that in any elections to come they would know the consequences of choosing Hamas. The third element was to empower President Abbas by “strengthening security agencies under his control.” This explained why Abbas decided to tighten his grip over the entire Palestinian security apparatus in February 2006. The United States increasingly reinforced Abbas’ security forces financially, by training and equipment. Unsurprisingly, Israel allowed the “delivery of 2,000 rifles from Egypt to the Presidential Guard in Gaza” at the end of 2006. Moreover, Israel had already captured “half” of the Hamas government and its legislative members after Hamas imprisoned “Corporal Shalit in June 2006.”⁷³

These American-Israeli measures, supported by the European Union, increased the political polarization between Fatah and Hamas. In a Saudi endeavor to heal the Palestinian divisions, both Fatah and Hamas met in Mecca and reached an accord to form a new unity government by February 2007. The Mecca accord did not oblige Hamas to recognize Israel and did even not “refer to the Quartet’s” conditions.⁷⁴ Although the EU and the Quartet declared their “support” to the Mecca fragile accord, it did not last and clashes between Fatah and Hamas reached their climax in June 2007. The result was that Hamas seized Gaza and Fatah seized the West Bank with two Palestinian governments. Each government claimed legitimacy in both

⁷² Altunisik, “EU and the Israeli-Palestinian Conflict,” 114.

⁷³ Sayigh, “Inducing a Failed State in Palestine,” 14-21.

⁷⁴ Migdalovitz, “Israel-Arab Negotiations: US Policy,” 20

Gaza and the West Bank.⁷⁵ Accordingly, the European and the American policies in 2006 and 2007 and their unspoken sustainment of the “Israeli blockade of the Gaza Strip” widened the gap between Hamas and Fatah and led to a severe division in June 2007. Europe closely aligned itself with, if did not match with the American and the Israeli approaches. This European acquiescence to the American and the Israeli positions was well-articulated in the words of Muriel Asseburg:

The European [Union] continue[d] to accept the United States as the main player in the Middle East and resign[ed] [itself] to playing a complementary role...[It] ha[s] left politics almost exclusively to the Americans. At the same, [it] contended [itself] with coat-tailing the political approaches of Israel and the United States (such as isolating Hamas and blockading the Gaza Strip) rather than...developing...alternatives.⁷⁶

The convergent European-American policies of Isolation and embargo on Hamas have led to numerous unconstructive results for the EU and the US. As for the EU, the blockade weakened, if not paralyzed, the Palestinian institutional reform that the EU embarked on with the Oslo accords. The EU reinforced Fatah and President Abbas at the expense of any genuine reform as a tool to pressure Hamas. Additionally, the EU’s integrity and creditability in the Middle East was being severely called into question. This was mainly as a result of Europe’s “double standard” when it refuted the results of a democratic process in Palestine and complied with the American policies in the conflict. Moreover, the pressure put on Hamas “radicalized” it more than before, brought the Iranian and the Syrian sway into the Palestinian question, polarized the two major factions in Palestine against each other, and finally led to Hamas’s seizure of Gaza in June 2007.⁷⁷ As for the US, its plan to remove Hamas from the Palestinian scene did not work out because Hamas tightened its grip on Gaza and the Palestinian polarization reached its zenith.⁷⁸

After Gaza had been seized by Hamas in June 2007, Europe followed the United States’ triangle approach identified as the “West Bank first strategy.” This triangle approach consisted of reinforcing Abbas, “isolating Hamas” rule in Gaza, and turning a blind eye to the “Israeli blockade of Gaza Strip.” The ultimate transatlantic goal of these policies was to change the Palestinians’ perceptions away from Hamas’s alternative of military resistance and toward

⁷⁵ Altunisik, “EU and the Israeli-Palestinian Conflict,” 116.

⁷⁶ Muriel. Asseburg, “The Arab-Israeli Conflict,” in: *German Middle East and North Africa Policy: Interests, Strategies, Options*, ed. Steinberg Guido (SWP Research paper, German Institute for International and Security Affairs, Berlin, September 2009), 22-24.

⁷⁷ Altunisik, “EU and the Israeli-Palestinian Conflict,” 114-116.

⁷⁸ Sayigh, “Inducing a Failed State in Palestine,” 21.

Abbas's choice of peaceful negotiations.⁷⁹ Unsurprisingly, both the United States and Europe endorsed all the decisions made by Abbas which encompassed the declaration of a "state of emergency," the termination of the "National Unity Government," and most importantly setting up a provisional "government" headed by Salam Fayyad as a legally recognized government even though the "cabinet" was not endorsed by the legislative body as stipulated in the "Palestinian Basic Law."⁸⁰ The European financial support was largely redirected to "humanitarian" projects as a way to alleviate the catastrophic situation in Gaza, to reinforce the West Bank economy, and to reorganize the "Palestinian civil police force."⁸¹

Briefly, Hamas's victory constituted a transatlantic dilemma. The Quartet's three conditions on Hamas were the exit. With the refusal of Hamas, transatlantic policies increasingly converged and adopted isolation and blockade policies that led to Palestinian divisions and the Hamas seizure of Gaza in June 2007. Both Europe and the United States adopted the West Bank first strategy with the aim of isolating Hamas and reinforcing Abbas and his cabinet in the West Bank politically, financially and diplomatically.

- Annapolis Conference 2007 And Gaza War 2008-2009: A Leader- Follower Model

The Annapolis conference materialized in the context of the West Bank first strategy. In mid July 2007, almost four weeks after Hamas had brought the Gaza Strip under its control, President Bush declared that a "meeting" between Israel and Palestinian authority was due to be held in the fall of 2007. Initially, the meeting was meant to prop up and restructure the performance of the Palestinian institutions and to diplomatically reinforce Abbas and his newly provisional cabinet in the West Bank, headed by Salam Fayyad, versus the Hamas' government in the Gaza Strip. In the same month, Tony Blair was chosen by the United States, as the Middle East "Quartet Envoy," to reorganize "governmental institutions," revitalize the "economy," and enforce "law and order" in the Palestinian territories, mainly the West Bank.⁸² In fact, Tony Blair was appointed against the desire of Russia and without "consultation with the European Union." This assured that the Quartet members, particularly the European Union, were not on an equal

⁷⁹ Asseburg, "The Arab-Israeli Conflict," 27.

⁸⁰ —, "European Conflict Management in the Middle East," 38.

⁸¹ —, "The Arab-Israeli Conflict," 27.

⁸² "The Israeli-Palestinian Conflict: Annapolis and After" (Policy Briefing, International Crisis Group, Middle East Briefing n. 22, 20 November 2007), 2, [sel.isn.ch/.../b22_the_israeli_palestinian_conflict_annapolis_and_after.pdf](http://www.isn.ch/.../b22_the_israeli_palestinian_conflict_annapolis_and_after.pdf).

footing but were instead dominated by the United States.⁸³ Nevertheless, the European Union's efforts played an influential role not only in boosting Abbas's power in the West Bank but also in persuading the United States to bring the peace process back on track. The Annapolis gathering was partly an outcome of the European pressure for a revitalization of the peace process that the Europeans enthusiastically desired.⁸⁴

In the aftermath of the Bush announcement of the Annapolis gathering, intensive deliberations and negotiations were held between Abbas and Olmert aiming at reaching a "declaration of principles" on core settlement matters: "Jerusalem, borders, settlements, refuges, security, and water." After sixteen weeks of negotiations the result was nil since the declaration was not agreed upon.⁸⁵ Therefore, by the end of November 2007, the Annapolis conference was held and Bush declared an unpretentious "Joint Understanding" as an alternative to a "declaration of principles." In the Joint Understanding both Abbas and Olmert pledged to continue intensive negotiations over the final settlement issues with the intention of accomplishing a final settlement before the end of Bush's last term in 2008. In addition, both parties announced that they would renew their "obligation" to put the Road Map into practice and that the United States would scrutinize and adjudicate their performance progress. "General James L. Jones" was appointed as the American "special envoy for Middle East security."⁸⁶

It been argued that the Annapolis conference constituted a breakthrough because it jumped to negotiations over the final settlements issues which were supposed to be in the third phase of the Road Map. Israel has always rejected to discuss these final issues unless the Palestinians reform their institutions and eradicate violence as stipulated in the phase one of the Road Map. Additionally, it was claimed that the Annapolis conference revitalized the road map by renewing obligations on both sides and that it reengaged the moderate Arab states again with Israel.⁸⁷

The European Union has attempted to capitalize on the new momentum in the peace process through a complementary role to the US leading efforts. Therefore, it launched an "EU Action plan for the Middle East peace process" in October 2007. It largely emphasized the

⁸³ Almut Moller, "Making an Effort but Making Little Headway: EU Middle East under German Leadership" (Policy Analysis, Bertelsmann Group for Policy Research .C.A.P, 5. 2007), 4.

⁸⁴ Altunisik, "EU and the Israeli-Palestinian Conflict," 116.

⁸⁵ Carol Migdalovitz, "Israeli-Palestinian Peace Process: the Annapolis Conference" (CRS Report for Congress, Congressional Research Service, 7 December 2007), 1.

⁸⁶ Ibid., 3.

⁸⁷ Ibid., 6-7.

Palestinian state building as a prerequisite for reaching a final accord with Israel and the accomplishment of the two-state solution. In the words of the action plan, “modern and democratic police forces, institution building and good governance, growth of the Palestinian economy, and customs and trade” were the aims of the Europeans to build Palestinian institutions and the Palestinian economy.⁸⁸ Volker Perthes described the European action plan for the Middle East peace process as “realistic” and complementary to the American efforts. In Perthes’s own words “there is no more lamenting about Europe's being a payer, but not a player; nor any mention of any other diplomatic role except the support of American efforts through the Quartet.”⁸⁹

Despite the active American endeavor and the supportive European role, no improvement was attained on the ground. Instead, deterioration dominated the Palestinian-Israeli conflict. In January 2008, violence erupted again, Israel tightened its embargo on the Gaza Strip and no negotiations were held over the final issues as it had been stipulated in the Annapolis Understanding. Although “security cooperation” was recommenced between Israel and the West Bank government to bring “law and order” back, nothing else was accomplished. In his visit to Jerusalem on the first of January 2008, Bush did not take any decisive action against the Israeli settlement and assured instead that “he would only be involved to the extent the two parts proved serious about making peace.”⁹⁰

Bush also had affirmed that he has vowed for assuring the security of Israel and that Israel’s security would not be “jeopardized” at the expense of “establishing a Palestinian state.”⁹¹ Bush even reiterated that the United States’ responsibility in the conflict was confined to “facilitation” and not mediation, and that the “success of Annapolis” largely relied on the Palestinians readiness for peace. In fact, two days after the Annapolis conference, Olmert gave his orders to enlarge and accelerate the construction of the Israeli settlements and even to turn the illicit “outposts” into legitimate and stable settlements. Olmert even declared that “Israel will not

⁸⁸ State Building for Peace in the Middle East: An EU Action Strategy, “Joint paper by EU High Representative Javier Solana and EU Commissioner for External Relations Benita Ferrero-Waldner, October 2007, http://www.consilium.europa.eu/uedocs/cms_data/docs/pressdata/en/reports/97949.pdf.

⁸⁹ Volker Perthes, “Beyond Peace: Israel, the Arab World, and Europe,” (Open Democracy, 22 January 2008), 3, http://www.swp-berlin.org/common/get_document.php?asset_id=4673.html.

⁹⁰ Muriel Asseburg and Volker Perthes, “Beyond Annapolis: The Case for Stronger EU Enlargement” (BEPA Monthly Brief, no. 12, February 2008), 1.

⁹¹ Norman Podhoretz, “Israel and the Palestinians: Has Bush Reengaged?” (Commentary, April 2008), 45.

return to the pre-1967 border; that Israel will remain the sole sovereign in Jerusalem, and that not a single refugee will be allowed back into Israel.”⁹²

In spite of the modest results of the Annapolis conference, the Bush administration’s re-engagement in the conflict was a turning point compared to previous seven years of hands off and rhetorical engagement policies. In a sense, Bush declared that he was geared up to spend more personal capital to accomplish a solution to the final settlement issues of the Palestinian-Israeli conflict. Condoleezza Rice pressed the vitality of solving the conflict and the necessity of giving hope to the Palestinians that peace could be attained on what she described as a “Political Horizon” and that Israel ought to make concessions and be prepared to pull out from “most of the West Bank.”⁹³

The reasons for the American re-engagement in the conflict at that time were numerous. The first was the Bush administration’s final endeavor to restore the deteriorated American credibility by assuring that it was still the most essential actor in the Arab-Israeli conflict. As a “lame duck,” President Bush was in a pressing need for an accomplishment that would set off the catastrophe in Iraq.⁹⁴ In addition, it was not accidently that the Annapolis conference was announced directly after Hamas seized the Gaza Strip. In that sense, Annapolis was meant to prop up the West Bank government and isolate the Gaza government.⁹⁵ Norman Podhoretz clearly clarified this rationale beyond the Annapolis conference:

[Annapolis] will give the Palestinian people new hope by presenting them...what they can expect if they follow the (putative) way of Abbas instead of the way of Hamas. If they choose the path of the Road Map, they will be rewarded by a sovereign democratic state..., whereas the Jihadist route of Hamas will lead them to nothing but endless war, and the chaos, poverty and oppression...in Gaza under Hamas’s control.⁹⁶

Moreover, in conjunction with the European pressure on the United States to forcefully engage in the Palestinian-Israeli conflict, the moderate Arab states urged the United States to take a robust action with regard to the conflict as a prerequisite to get their support in Iraq and in

⁹² Henry Siegman, “Annapolis: The Good, the Bad and the Ugly” (FRIDE, Comment, December 2007), 1-3, www.fride.org/download/COM_Post_Annapolis_ENG_dic07.pdf.

⁹³ Helle Malmvig, “In the Midst of Change: the US and the Middle East from the War in Iraq to the War in Gaza” (Research paper, Institute for Strategy, Faculty of Strategy and Military Operations, Royal Danish Defence College, Copenhagen, March 2009), 13.

⁹⁴ George E. Irani, “Annapolis: Three Lame Ducks In Search Of Peace” (FRIDE, Comment, December 2007), 1, <http://www.fride.org/publication/307/annapolis:-three-lame-ducks-in-search-of-peace.html>.

⁹⁵ International Crisis Group, “The Israeli-Palestinian Conflict: Annapolis and After” (Policy Briefing, Middle East Briefing, no. 22, 20 November 2007), 13.

⁹⁶ Podhoretz, “Has Bush Reengaged?,” 45.

the confrontation with the daunting Iranian sway in the Middle East and its nuclear defiance. The United States viewed the Middle East as a region where a struggle between the “moderates and the extremists” was at its peak and that solving the Palestinian-Israeli conflict would undermine the extremists and empower the moderates whether within Palestine or within the entire Middle East.⁹⁷ This explained the rationale behind inviting Syria to Annapolis as a way to construct a “wedge’ between Iran and Syria.”⁹⁸

With the conclusion of Bush's second tenure, the declared goal in the Annapolis- to accomplish an accord over the final settlement issues by the end of 2008- had to be written off. Conversely, a systematic and rapid increase in “settlement building in the West Bank” meant to the Palestinians that Israel has neither the intention nor the willingness to withdraw from the Palestinian territories. With a humble “socioeconomic” enhancement in the West Bank, Gaza was thrown into dreadful poverty, which widened the political gap between Fatah and Hamas. The ultimate result of the America leads-European follows “West Bank first” strategy were “two adverse, authoritarian systems” in both Gaza and the West Bank and the internationally accepted principle of the “two-state solution” became highly unlikely.⁹⁹ Muriel Asseburg's doubts about the impracticability of the two-state solution despite the regional and international recognition of the principle were well-founded:

While a two-state solution has become the internationally accepted paradigm for the settlement of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict...the prospects of its realization are fast disappearing. The increasing fragmentation of the West Bank caused by continued settlement construction, settler roads, check points and the separation barrier as well as the...separation of the West Bank and Gaza make a two-state solution ever less likely.¹⁰⁰

In fact, by the end of October 2007, Condoleezza Rice expressed her fears that the two-state solution would be undermined without a “political horizon” for peace. In August 2008, “Ahmed Qurie, senior PLO negotiator and former PA Prime Minister,” threatened that the Palestinians would give up the two-state solution and would instead opt for a “one state, a binational state” in face of the Israeli rejection to their demands. This threat was in fact effective, because after 30 days of Qurie menace Olmert confessed that Israel should “share the land” with

⁹⁷ Malmvig, “In the Midst of Change: US and Middle East,” 14.

⁹⁸ Irani, “Annapolis: Three Lane Ducks,” 2.

⁹⁹ Asseburg, “European Conflict Management in Middle East,” 30-31.

¹⁰⁰ ____, “The Arab-Israeli Conflict,” 28.

the Palestinians “if it does not want a binational state.”¹⁰¹ Olmert even acknowledged that “Jerusalem” could be “divided” between Israel and Palestinians. However, both Olmert and Abbas were very weak domestically. Olmert's shaky coalition depended largely on not making concessions to the Palestinians, whereas Abbas did not have a full control over the West Bank and did not achieve anything in the negotiation process which in turn undermined his credibility.¹⁰²

To conclude, Annapolis represented a re-engagement of the Bush administration in the Palestinian-Israeli conflict, albeit in the context of the West Bank first strategy which meant to support Abbas and isolate Hamas. The Annapolis conference skipped over the first and the second phases of the Road Map and went directly to tackle the final settlement issues and to revitalize the road map commitments on both sides. Europeans pushed the United States to resuscitate the peace process and encouraged Annapolis through the European Action Plan for the Middle East peace process. The European Action Plan intended to improve the Palestinian economy and institutions and confirmed at the same time that the European Union was attempting to play a complementary role to the US leadership in the Peace Process.

However, the Annapolis implementation stood in contrast to the outline goal: striking an accord over the final settlement issues by the end of 2008. Instead, Israeli settlements mounted, no agreement on any final issue was struck, polarization between Fatah and Hamas reached its acme, and impracticability of the two-state solution and rising violence between Hamas and Israel were the final results.

- Gaza War and the Transatlantic Reactions

The Gaza war, the “Cast Lead operation,” came during the last days of the Bush administration in the White House, three weeks before the Obama administration took the helm on January 20, 2009, one and half months before the Israeli legislative election, and twelve days before the end of President Abbas tenure in the Palestinian presidency. An indirect “six-month ceasefire,” brokered by Egypt between Israel and Hamas in June 2008, came to its end in December 2008. In reaction to Israeli attacks, Hamas declared an official end of the ceasefire and rocket assaults on the Israeli settlements increased rapidly. Israel embarked on its air attack Cast Lead operation against Gaza Strip on December 27, 2008 and followed by ground incursion to

¹⁰¹ Jim Zanotti, “Israel and the Palestinians: Prospects for a Two-State Solution” (CRS Report for Congress, Congressional Research Service, 10 December 2008), 3-4.

¹⁰² Perthes, “Beyond Peace: Israel, Arab World, and Europe,” 2.

the Gaza Strip on January 3, 2009, in an intensive attempt to topple Hamas rule in Gaza and to stop Hamas's rockets.¹⁰³ The American reaction, during the last days of the Bush administration, was full and an unconditional support to Israel. From the outset of the war, the Bush administration stuck to its position of putting the entire blame on Hamas's terrorist assaults on Israeli settlements, and insisted that Israel has the very right to defend itself and to deter Hamas's acts of terrorism. Bush even rejected the European and the Arab calls for ceasefire without concrete guarantees of "monitoring" and stopping the "flow of smuggled weapons" to Gaza Strip. This position was highly articulated in Bush's comment on the war:

The United States is leading diplomatic efforts to achieve a meaningful cease-fire that is fully respected...another cease-fire that leads to rocket attacks on Israel is not acceptable...there must be monitoring mechanisms in place to help ensure that smuggling of weapons to terrorist groups in Gaza comes to an end.¹⁰⁴

The American position was further sustained by Condoleezza Rice's assertion that she has no intention to pay a visit to the Middle East in the foreseeable future and that a "durable and sustainable" truce was the only acceptable prerequisite for ending the war.¹⁰⁵ It has been argued that the United States had given Israel a carte blanche to pursue its operations to destroy Hamas rule in Gaza Strip by making its acceptance to any cease-fire offer conditional on a complete stop of Hamas's rocket assaults on Israel.¹⁰⁶ This explained the United States' rebuff of a proposal to the UN Security Council to cease fire on January 3, 2009.¹⁰⁷

On the other hand, the European reactions rhetorically called for an immediate cease-fire but they were in practice at odds with their reactions to the war, not unified, and ineffective. In contrast to the Bush administration's refusal to support a cease fire, most of the European states rhetorically expressed their demands for an immediate ceasefire and their grave concerns over the humanitarian catastrophe in Gaza. The High Representative of CFSP, Solana, articulated his deep concerns over the "toll of Palestinian civilians" and over the future of the peace process,

¹⁰³ EurActive, "EU Seeks Gaza Role Despite Conflicting Views," 5 January 2009, <http://www.euractiv.com/en/foreign-affairs/eu-seeks-gaza-role-despite-conflicting-views/article-178272.html>.

¹⁰⁴ Fox News, "Bush: Hamas Attacks on Israel An 'Act of Terror'," January 2, 2009, <http://www.foxnews.com/politics/2009/01/02/pres-bush-hamas-attacks-israel-acts-terror.html>.

¹⁰⁵ CNN World, "Bush Blames Hamas for Gaza Conflict," January 2, 2009, http://articles.cnn.com/2009-01-02/world/bush.gaza_1_gaza-hamas-palestinian-medical-sources?s=PM:WORLD.html.

¹⁰⁶ Anthony H. Cordesman, "The Fighting in Gaza: How does it End? (And, Will It?) " (Commentary, Center for Strategic and International Studies, 5 January 2009), 1.

¹⁰⁷ Alex Spillius, "Bush Gives Israel Diplomatic Support over Gaza Offensive," January 4, 2009, www.telegraph.co.uk/.../Bush-gives-Israel-diplomatic-support-over-Gaza-offensive.html.

while the French President Sarkozy denounced the Israeli incursion, described it as “unjustifiable provocation,” and called for an “immediate ceasefire.”¹⁰⁸

Nevertheless, divisions among European states' positions characterized the European reactions. While “France, the UK, Ireland and Luxembourg” denounced the “disproportionate” military strikes on Gaza, Czechs and Germany supported Israel. The President of the EU, from Czech, released a provocative proclamation in the name of the EU, arguing that the Israeli incursion in the Gaza Strip was “more defensive than offensive.” After An angry reaction, particularly of the French, Czechs amended their position by stressing that the Israeli duty to protect itself “does not allow actions which largely affect civilians.”¹⁰⁹ Germany provided full and unconditional support to Israel and aligned itself with the American perquisite of Hamas stopping its rockets on Israel; this was expressed both by Chancellor Merkel or Foreign Minister Steinmeier.¹¹⁰ Interestingly, Britain’s Gordon Brown aligned himself with the European Union and distanced himself from the American position. Brown portrayed the Israeli assault on Gaza as “an escalation” and even demanded an “immediate ceasefire.”¹¹¹

Ineffectiveness and lack of leverage was the landmark of the European actions with regard to the Gaza war. In spite of the active French endeavors to cease fire, Israel refused Sarkozy's call for immediate ceasefire in an EU ministerial meeting at the end of December 2008. The European Union sent an “official mission” to the Middle East, headed by the Czech foreign minister and composed of his French and the Swedish counterparts, the high representative of the CFSP, and the EU external relations commissioner. Concurrently, the French president embarked on an individual mission visiting all the actors in the Middle East. The result of the European efforts was next to zero, albeit Israel accepted an Egyptian proposal for a truce which then turned out to be an Egyptian-French proposal.¹¹² Both Muriel Asseburg and Volker Perthes lamented the feeble European response to Gaza war:

¹⁰⁸ James Joyner, “Transatlantic Divide on Israel Attacks In Gaza” (Atlantic Council, New Atlanticist Policy and Analysis Blog, January 5, 2009),

http://www.acus.org/new_atlanticist/transatlantic-divide-israel-attacks-gaza.05.html.

¹⁰⁹ Timothy James Neale, “Confusion Reigns in EU Response to Gaza War,” August 1, 2009,

http://english.ohmynews.com/articleview/article_view.asp?menu=c10400&no=384577&rel_no=1.html.

¹¹⁰ DW-World.DE, “Germany Urges Muslim Nations to Help End Hamas Attacks,” January 1, 2009,

<http://www.dw-world.de/dw/article/0,,3915847,00.html>.

¹¹¹ Spillius, “Bush Gives Israel Diplomatic Support over Gaza.”

¹¹² Timothy James Neale, “Confusion Reigns in EU Response to Gaza War,” August 1, 2009,

http://english.ohmynews.com/articleview/article_view.asp?menu=c10400&no=384577&rel_no=1.html.

Europe did not perform well during the Gaza war. Individual attempts to mediate yielded few results. The European Union as a whole proved incapable of acting swiftly, vigorously, and with single voice. It failed to fill the vacuum so apparent during the American interregnum and to campaign convincingly for a peaceful resolution to the conflict and respect for international law.¹¹³

In fact, the chasm between the European rhetoric and the concrete actions was obvious in the Gaza war. While Europe called for ceasefire, it had no leverage on Israel and it even affirmed that it would “upgrade” its relations with Israel:

When assessing the EU's response to the military offensive in Gaza, the observer is struck by the growing gap separating EU political aims and legal commitments, and the absence of concrete measures to ensure that such goals are accomplished and commitments kept.¹¹⁴

On January 18, 2009, Israel ended its military operations and claimed that it achieved its goals in the Gaza Strip. At this point, Americans and European converged to achieve a ceasefire through the UN Security Council. After intensive deliberations and a compromise between the United States and the Arab and the European states, a UN mandate (1860) was endorsed by all Security Council members and with US abstention. The resolution stipulated an “immediate, durable and fully respected ceasefire, leading to the full withdrawal of Israeli forces from Gaza” demanded to “prevent arms smuggling” to the Gaza Strip and asked Israel to “re-open” its “border crossing.”¹¹⁵ Concurrent with the UN mandate, the Bush administration and Israel signed a bilateral accord to end Gaza arms smuggling and to ensure that Hamas did not remilitarize itself again. The agreement provoked the Arab countries, particularly Egypt, because it was struck without consultation and because it emphasized monitoring the Red Sea.¹¹⁶ It is worth mentioning that five “European prime ministers plus French President Sarkozy” paid a visit to Israel following the UN mandate and the Israeli withdrawal from Gaza Strip. These six countries did not condemn Israel and abstained to reiterate the unacceptable “disproportionate” Israeli military incursion. Instead, Germany and France offered to assist Israel to halt the influx of

¹¹³ Muriel Asseburg and Volker Perthes, “After Gaza: What the United States and Europe Must Do in the Middle East,” (A New Transatlantic Partnership, IP, spring 2009), 43.

¹¹⁴ Euro-Mediterranean Human Rights Network, “Active but Acquiescent: EU's Response to the Israeli Military Offensive in the Gaza,” March 2009, <http://www.euromedrights.net/usr/00000047/00002936.pdf>.

¹¹⁵ Al Jazeera, “UN Passes Gaza Ceasefire Resolution,” <http://english.aljazeera.net/news/americas/2009/01/2009191340884788.html>.

¹¹⁶ Haaretz, “Text of U.S.-Israel Agreement to End Gaza Arms Smuggling,” January 16, 2009, <http://www.haaretz.com/hasen/pages/1056175.html>.

smuggled arms into Gaza, while the four other countries called for a humanitarian relief to the Gaza population.¹¹⁷

The results of the Gaza War were along the same lines. While Hamas's military apparatus and leadership was highly damaged, it survived and remained in control of the Gaza Strip. On the political and the popular level, Hamas gained strength and popularity, not only in Gaza but also in the West Bank at the expense of Fatah and President Abbas. According to Israeli public opinion polls Hamas's leaders had more popularity than Abbas's in Palestine:

In an Israeli polling conducted right after the [Gaza] war, Hamas leader Haniyeh was found to be the most trusted Palestinian politician with 21 percent support among Palestinians in the West Bank and Gaza, whereas Abbas received only 13 percent support.¹¹⁸

Additionally, the Palestinian rift between Fatah and Hamas widened further. By the official end of President Abbas tenure on January 9, 2009, Hamas declared that Abbas was no more president of the Palestinian Authority and had no more legitimacy.¹¹⁹ Moreover, Hamas attained “regional legitimacy and international sympathy.” It was asked to represent Palestine in the “Arab emergency summit in Qatar in January 2009.” Furthermore, the war resulted in a split between the moderate and the extremist Arab regimes.¹²⁰

To conclude, the Gaza War strengthened the extremists on both sides, in Israel and Palestine. It strengthened Hamas's political sway in Palestine and brought in an extremist Israeli government, headed by Netanyahu, which was against any settlement and against the two-state solution. In other words, the moderates and the peace seekers on each side were weakened. Fatah and President Abbas were discredited in Palestine and the labor party achieved its lowest electoral votes in Israeli history.

¹¹⁷ Oded Eran, “A Reversal in Israeli-EU Relations?,” *Strategic Assessment* 12, no.1(2009): 63.

¹¹⁸ Malmvig, “In the Midst of Change: US and Middle East,” 25.

¹¹⁹ Muriel Asseburg and Volker Perthes, “Is the EU Up to the Requirements of Peace in the Middle East?,” *International Spectator* 44, no. 3 (2009): 20.

¹²⁰ Malmvig, “In the Midst of Change: US and Middle East,” 26.

▪ U.S Aggressive Engagement, Europe's Support: More Transatlantic Convergence

In contrast to eight years of deliberate disengagement of the Bush administration, the Obama administration instead pursued an “aggressive engagement” strategy in the Palestinian-Israeli conflict.¹²¹ In his electoral campaign, Obama pledged that the Middle East Peace Process would be on top of his agenda and that he would be personally and assertively engaged in the conflict as soon as he was inaugurated.¹²² Three days after he took the office, Obama appointed “George Mitchell” as a “special envoy to the Middle East” who became swiftly engaged in the conflict by making numerous tours to the Middle East. As a symbolic gesture of his interest in the Middle East in general and in the Palestinian-Israeli conflict in particular, Obama made his first official call to the Palestinian leader Abbas and gave “his first interview” with the “Arab satellite channel Al-Arabia.”¹²³ The Obama administration vigorously adopted the “two-state” solution as the guiding principle to accomplish a settlement of the conflict.¹²⁴

Europe warmly welcomed the new administration’s engagement in the Palestinian-Israeli conflict and showed its willingness to work with the United States. In other words, the European Union and its member states highly supported Obama's initiative and “offered” to play a complementary role to his endeavor to reach a two-state solution.¹²⁵

Ironically, while there was a more transatlantic convergence over the Palestinian-Israeli conflict, the ground situation in both Palestine and Israel did not match this enthusiasm. This situation prompted Dr. Lars Berger to argue that:

The ultimate irony of contemporary Middle East politics could be that at the same moment where the U.S. is returning to a pattern of more vigorous diplomatic engagement, the regional political landscape, in both Israel and Palestine, is shifting in such a way as to severely limit the chances of success.¹²⁶

The Obama administration and its European allies faced by harsh realities in both Israel and Palestine. The Palestinian factions turned to be more polarized; divisions between Fatah and Hamas augmented, and Hamas gained new and larger popularity while the credibility of Fatah

¹²¹ Asseburg, “The Arab-Israeli Conflict,” 28-29.

¹²² Rebecca Simon, “Obama and the Middle East,” the Foreign Policy Center, <http://fpc.org.uk/articles/416.html>.

¹²³ Malmvig, “In the Midst of Change: US and Middle East,” 28.

¹²⁴ Asseburg, “Is the EU Up to the Requirements of Peace,” 21.

¹²⁵ Ibid., 21-22.

¹²⁶ Lars Berger, “Between New Hopes and Old Realities – the Obama Administration and the Middle East,” *Orient II* (2009): 31.

and the Palestinian President dwindled.¹²⁷ Concurrently, the February 2009 Israeli elections brought the extreme right to the fore and an Israeli government headed by Benjamin Netanyahu took the helm, with a solid vision to abandon the two-state solution.¹²⁸

Nevertheless, the Obama administration, backed by its European allies pursued its aggressive engagement in the conflict. Based on the assumption that the United States could not address its numerous troubles in the Middle East without first handling the Middle East Peace Process, the Obama administration, in its first six months, vigorously embarked on a series of talks and meetings with both the Israeli and the Palestinian leaders and also with regional powers such as Egypt and Jordan. The meetings aimed initially at paving the way for re-launching the peace talks between Israel and the Palestinians. The United States even partially endorsed the Arab Peace initiative as a guiding component in any peace accord that was to be struck.¹²⁹ Obama's speech at Cairo University in June remarkably listed the "Palestinian question" as the source of all American troubles in the Middle East and emphasized that it should be addressed as soon as possible. Obama even acknowledged the "suffering of the Palestinian people" by the Israeli occupation as unbearable. Obama urged the Palestinians to renounce violence, but he also urged Israel to bring its settlement construction to an end.¹³⁰

The Obama administration's aggressive engagement approach was challenged by an Israeli government reluctant to accept the two-state solution in principle. In May 2009, Obama personally urged Netanyahu to completely freeze the Israeli settlement activities as well as to approve the two-state solution. However, Netanyahu contended that the Israeli settlements in the West Bank were a natural growth of the state of Israel and refused to even rhetorically accept the two-state solution. Later on, after Obama's speech at Cairo University, Netanyahu rhetorically accepted "the principle of a Palestinian state" only if it was an unarmed state and recognized Israel as a Jewish state.¹³¹ On the Palestinian side, Mahmud Abass postulated a full Israeli freeze

¹²⁷ Asseburg, "Is the EU Up to the Requirements of Peace," 19.

¹²⁸ Jonathan Marcus, "The 2009 Israeli Election: A Bump in the Road to Peace?," *The Washington Quarterly* 32, no. 3 (2009): 55-56.

¹²⁹ Patrycja Sasnal, "U.S. Policy towards Actors in the Arab-Israeli Conflict: Between Bush and Obama" (PISM Research papers, the Polish Institute of International Affairs, *Materiały Studialne*, no.12, August 2009), 41.

¹³⁰ Alvaro De Vasconcelos, "Obama and the Palestinian Question" (ISS Opinion, European Institute for Security Studies, June 2009), 1.

¹³¹ Rathnam Indurthy, "The Obama Administration's Approach to the Palestinian-Israeli Conflict: Opportunities and Constrains," *Strategic Analysis* 34, no.1 (2010): 19-20.

of its settlements activities and an Israeli endorsement of an independent Palestinian state in order to re-engage in diplomatic negotiations with Israel.¹³²

Under American pressure to freeze the settlements, at the end of May 2009, Netanyahu's government reduced its ultimate refusal to into a temporary freeze of settlements construction from three to six months. While the Palestinian authority rejected the Israeli proposal and insisted on a complete freeze of the settlement activities, the United States received the Israeli proposal "positively" and judged it as an "important step forward."¹³³ Concurrently, the Obama's National Security Advisor, James Jones, made a clear cut linkage between the solution of the Palestinian dilemma and facing the Iranian nuclear peril. This explained the Obama administration's approval to the UNSC resolution calling for an inception of a "Palestinian state."¹³⁴

Nevertheless, the settlements issue remained a major source of contention between the Obama administration and Israel. In a step, perceived by the Arabs as an American retreat from its initial stance toward the Israeli settlements, Secretary of State Hillary Clinton highly esteemed Netanyahu's pledge to only "restrain" rather than freeze the Israeli settlements.¹³⁵ In addition, a triple meeting held between Obama and both Netanyahu and Abass resulted in nothing but pictures and photos. Each side stuck to his position; whereas Netanyahu provided an unconditional negotiation process, Abbas postulated a full freeze of the Israeli settlements before any kind of negotiation.¹³⁶ Moreover, in mid November 2009, Netanyahu declared another "expansion" of settlement in Eastern Jerusalem. The Obama administration responded negatively by arguing that it was against "Israel's security."¹³⁷

Furthermore, in mid March 2010, in the middle of the Obama administration's efforts to initiate indirect Israeli-Palestinian talks and throughout a formal visit of the Vice-President, Biden, to Israel, Netanyahu government declared its intention of constructing "1,600 housing units in East Jerusalem." The Israeli decision extremely outraged the Obama administration and a new phase of an American rhetorical criticism to Israel materialized.¹³⁸ Although Netanyahu

¹³² Marcus, "2009 Israeli Election: A Bump in the Road to Peace," 66-67.

¹³³ Indurthy, "Obama Administration's: Opportunities and Constrains," 20.

¹³⁴ "America's New Diplomacy: Barak Obama, Poised to Plunge," *The Economist*, May 14, 2009.

¹³⁵ "The Flagging Peace Process: is Israel too Strong for Barak Obama?," *The Economist*, November 5, 2009.

¹³⁶ Ken Dilanian, "Obama Urges Mideast Leaders: Find Way Forward," *USA Today*, September 22, 2009.

¹³⁷ Ilene R. Prusher, "Obama Raps Israel over New Jerusalem Settlement Plan," *Christian Science Monitor*, November 18, 2009.

¹³⁸ DeWayne Wickham, "Israel Insults the U.S with Go-It-Alone Tactics," *USA Today*, March 30, 2010.

made an apology later on, the White House Spokesman denounced the Israeli resolution and even considered it “an affront;” Hilary Clinton considered the resolution as “an insult” and a “negative signal.”¹³⁹ The stalemate continued and Obama made a statement on January that solving the Israeli-Palestinian conflict proved not as easy as his administration expected in a gesture of his partial failure to reach a settlement to the conflict.¹⁴⁰

As for Hamas, the Obama administration and Europe remained reluctant to deal with Hamas and focused on the “West Bank first” strategy and the three conditions that Hamas should meet in order to be accepted as a legal political power in Palestine.¹⁴¹ Furthermore, American and Israeli divergences over Iran evolved. Netanyahu made a clear- linkage between any progress in the peace process and the American endeavor to thwart a nuclear Iran. The United States, on the other hand, promoted a “parallel track” on both issues as the most effective technique to resolve them.¹⁴² This American linkage between the Palestinian-Israeli conflict and all the other Middle Eastern issues was very much evident when “General David Petraeus” contended that the failure of the Middle East peace process and the endemic animosity between Israel and the Arab states extremely obstruct the American interests in the region.¹⁴³

As a result of the new approach held by the Obama administration toward the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, Europe was encouraged to pressure Israel through its economic relations. In a sense, Europe made an unequivocal conditionality between getting into further and deeper association with Israel and the Netanyahu government’s willingness and readiness to accept the “two-state solution.”¹⁴⁴ This European position was materialized in Prague’s summit on April 5, 2009, when the EU announced its vigorous support to the American endeavor in the peace process anchored in the “Quartet” and the “two-state solution.”¹⁴⁵

¹³⁹ Ken Dilanian, “Recent Rifts adds Tension to AIPAC Meeting,” *USA Today*, March 22, 2010.

¹⁴⁰ Mahjoob Zweiri and Rula Awaad, “Obama’s “Smart-Power” Strategy, One Year On: the Case of the Middle East,” *Digest of Middle East Studies* 19, no.1 (2010): 11, <http://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/10.1111/j.1949-3606.2010.00001.x/pdf>.

¹⁴¹ Asseburg, “Is the EU Up to the Requirements of Peace,” 20.

¹⁴² *Ibid.*, 21.

¹⁴³ Oded Eran, “Israel and the US: That Bad?,” *Strategic Assessment* 13, no.1 (2010): 40-41.

¹⁴⁴ —, “A Reversal in Israel-EU Relations,” 59.

¹⁴⁵ *Ibid.*, 66.

▪ Neo-Realist Explanations of Transatlantic Policies towards the Conflict (2000-2008)

From the outset, the hands-off policy of the Bush administration with respect to the Palestinian-Israeli conflict was very clear cut. However, the Bush administration had to rhetorically engage in the conflict after the September 11 attacks. In the context of the United States' preparations to invade Afghanistan, Bush declared his vision of the two Israeli and Palestinian states in his speech at the United Nations. The Bush vision was mainly a bargaining chip for both the Arab states and his most loyal European ally (the United Kingdom under Tony Blair) to guarantee their support in his global war against terrorism.¹⁴⁶

Likewise, the Bush administration had to re-engage in the Palestinian question in 2002 in the context of its preparation for its war against Iraq. In that sense, the Quartet was endorsed by the United States and thus allowed symbolic participation of Europe, Russia and the United Nations in the Palestinian-Israeli conflict. The Bush administration was yearning for the support of its European allies and the Arab states and gave a pledge to resolve the conflict after the invasion of Iraq.¹⁴⁷ Scott Lasensky adequately pointed out this American trade-off policy by stating that "despite a long-standing disinclination to engage in Mideast peacemaking, the Bush administration is being forced to take more aggressive steps as a result of trade-offs related to Iraq."¹⁴⁸ Hence, the American desire to win Europe's approval for the United States' plan to invade Iraq and to legitimize US actions in the Middle East were the driving force behind the US endorsement of the Quartet.¹⁴⁹ It has been argued that Tony Blair pushed the Bush administration to a re-engage in the Palestinian-Israeli conflict as a bargaining card to ultimately sustain the American conquest to Iraq.¹⁵⁰

In the aftermath of the American Invasion of Iraq, the United States endorsed the Road Map, which was a genuinely European proposal, albeit on the Israeli terms. This US endorsement was basically a result of the American predicaments in Iraq and the failure to find the WMD there.¹⁵¹ In addition, the American administration sought to deliver constructive messages for both Europe and its Arab allies, particularly after the severe transatlantic rift over

¹⁴⁶ Christison, "All Those Old Issues: Bush and the Palestinian Conflict," 38.

¹⁴⁷ Milton Viorst, "The Road Map to Nowhere," *The Washington Quarterly* 26, no. 3 (2003): 177-178.

¹⁴⁸ Lasensky, "Avoiding Mideast Peace?," 20.

¹⁴⁹ Hunter, "Quartet Experience: A New Platform," 181- 182.

¹⁵⁰ Shapiro, "Towards a Post-American Europe," 37.

¹⁵¹ Muriel Asseburg et.al., "The European Union and the Crisis in the Middle East" ed. Martina Ortega (Chaillot paper, European Union, Institute for Security Studies, no. 62, July 2003), 6.

Iraq.¹⁵² However, the main explanatory factor of the American policy was the US special economic, political, military, and cultural relations with Israel. In other words, the American Israeli relations reached its acme of power and harmony with the Bush administration and Sharon government. One major example was the letter that Bush delivered to Sharon in 2004, denying the Palestinian right of return and the reaffirming the 1967 borders for any forthcoming final settlement between Israel and the Palestinians.¹⁵³

As for Europe, it had accepted for a long time, since Oslo 1993, to play a “complementary” role to the United States as the only reliable mediator in the peace process. However, as a result of the collapse of Oslo and the peace process in 2000 and the Bush’s hands-off approach in his first two years in office, the European Union sought to play a “more political role” in the conflict. This materialized in the fact that Europe became a member of the Quartet and drafted the outline of the Road Map that the United States later adopted, after it was revised according to Israeli terms.¹⁵⁴ In other words, it was the reluctance of the Bush administration to genuinely engage in the conflict that gave Europe a chance, along with “other international actors,” to engage to certain extent. Also the Bush administration had dumped a half century of a long-lasting American strategy to thwart any other players from having a say in the Israeli-Palestinian conflict.¹⁵⁵

Although Europe engaged more intensely in the conflict, it practically stayed at the margin for numerous reasons. First, the European Union has no unified foreign policy. Instead the EU depended profoundly on the diverse intergovernmental and national policies of each European state.¹⁵⁶ An example to explain the low efficiency of the European Union in this respect was the Seville Declaration in 2002. This declaration affirmed that any final settlement between Israel and the Palestinians should be founded on the 1967 borders. However, in practice, the European officials could not get together with the Palestinian leaders lest they might outrage the Israeli government. Europe also continued to import the “Israeli settlements’ products.” In

¹⁵² Gerd Nonneman, “A European View of the US Role in the Israeli-Palestinian Conflict,” ed. Martina Ortega (Chaillot paper, European Union, Institute for Security Studies, no. 62, July 2003), 40-41.

¹⁵³ Sasnal, “U.S. Policy: Between Bush and Obama,” 41-42.

¹⁵⁴ Asseburg, “From Declarations to Implementation? European Policy,” 11.

¹⁵⁵ Kaim, “Quartet Experience: Results,” 163-164.

¹⁵⁶ Simon Renk, “A Critical Assessment of EU’s Policy toward the Middle East Peace Process and the Palestinian Authority,” 16,
http://amcipsreports.net/PDF_books/BookIII13.pdf.

other words, the European declarations towards the Israeli-Palestinian conflict never developed into tangible actions.¹⁵⁷

The second factor was the long-lasting Israeli reluctance and suspicion towards any genuine political European role in the conflict. Despite the excellent “economic, cultural, and personal” relationship between Israel and Europe, Israel always robustly played down any European role when it came to any European political involvement in the Middle East conflict.¹⁵⁸ This Israeli attitude was essentially based on a perception that Europe was at large “pro-Arabs” and pro-Palestinian and that the United States should be the sole mediator in the peace process.¹⁵⁹ For instance, during a visit of the HR-CFSP Solana to the Middle East in mid-2004, Sharon explicitly argued that Europe would never have a genuine role in the peace process unless it modified its positions and seriously considered the “Israel’s security.” Another example was in 2003, when the Israeli government refused to meet the European “special envoy” to the Middle East, “Marco Otte” because he also convened with “Arafat.”¹⁶⁰

Thirdly, not only Israel but also the United States has always been unwilling to give the European Union any genuine political role in the conflict. Since the end of the Cold War and as a result of the incomparable “relative power” between the United States and Europe, an implicit formula of “division of labor” materialized. The United States monopolized the entire political process, whereas Europe reinforced the American efforts economically and created a regional environment favorable for peace through “multilateral cooperation” with the Arab states. Although the United States endorsed Europe as a part of the Quartet, it did not fully relinquish its full control over the conflict. In other words, the European Union accepted to follow the American leading role in the peace process on the grounds that there was no other technique to have a say in the conflict but to play a “complementary” role to the United States.¹⁶¹ This explained the fact that the European Union highlighted the Quartet as a European accomplishment and a sign of transatlantic convergence over the conflict. Membership in the Quartet gave the Europeans for the first time a genuine political role, despite the fact that it was

¹⁵⁷ Asseburg, “From Declarations to Implementation? European Policy,” 21.

¹⁵⁸ Gisela Dachs and Joel Peters, “Israel and Europe, the Troubled Relationship: Between Perception and Reality” (Discussion paper Published by the Israeli European Policy Network, the Center for the Study of European Politics and Society, Ben-Gurion University of the Negev), hsf.bgu.ac.il/europe/uploadDocs/iepnpgdjp.pdf.

¹⁵⁹ Kaim, “Complementarity: the European Union in the Middle East,” 38-39.

¹⁶⁰ Kaim, “Quartet Experience: Results,” 168.

¹⁶¹ —, “Complementarity: the European Union in the Middle East,” 41-42.

not only dominated in practice by the United States but remained on the whole rather unproductive.¹⁶² For instance, the Quartet officially announced the Road Map, but only after the United States had revised it numerous times according to American and Israeli terms. In addition, the Bush administration stipulated the announcement of the Plan on Palestinian political reform and election of a new “prime minister” and eventually released it unilaterally in June 2003.¹⁶³ Nevertheless, the genuine European aim of joining the Quartet was to increase its political sway in the conflict via “influencing the American policies” instead of having its own autonomous initiatives which were always rebuffed by both the United States and Israel.¹⁶⁴

Nevertheless, the political involvement of the European Union in the conflict augmented after the Israeli unilateral disengagement from Gaza Strip. The increased European involvement in the conflict emanated from two reasons. The first was a rapid increase of the military component of the European Security and Defence Policy. The EU had deployed a number of civilian and military missions abroad, for instance in Kosovo and the Republic of Congo, in the previous years. Consequently, the European Union showed a robust interventionist power of engagement to the United States and that it became capable to bear some of the transatlantic military burdens. The second was the fact that the transatlantic rift had healed to a certain extent in Bush’s second term. With respect to the Palestinian-Israeli conflict, the European Union preferred “to be effective through working” in harmony and under the model of the American leadership with Europe as a “complementary” power. This explained the fact that Israel endorsed for the first time two ESDP missions to monitor the Gaza borders and to “train the Palestinian police.”¹⁶⁵ Musu Costanza considered these missions as “unprecedented” because “for the first time EU military personnel supervised an area of security concern for Israel.”¹⁶⁶

The American predicaments in Iraq and Afghanistan had profound effects on the Bush administration’s second term, particularly from 2006 until 2008. A partial explanation of the American “rhetorical” involvement in the Palestinian-Israeli conflict was an American yearning to guarantee “regional” and international assistance in both Iraq and Afghanistan.¹⁶⁷ However, the regional situation in the Middle East between 2005 and 2007 went against the grain of the

¹⁶² Musu, “Madrid Quartet: Instrument of Multilateralism,” 12.

¹⁶³ Altunisik, “EU and the Israeli- Palestinian Conflict,” 111- 112.

¹⁶⁴ Musu, “The Madrid Quartet: Instrument of Multilateralism,” 5.

¹⁶⁵ Ibid., 118- 119.

¹⁶⁶ Musu, “Madrid Quartet: Instrument of Multilateralism,” 13.

¹⁶⁷ David Hastings Dunn, “‘Quaking Like a Duck’? Bush II and Presidential Power in the Second Term,” *International Affairs* 82, no. 1 (2006): 114-117.

United States. An outbreak of war between Israel and Hezbollah in July 2006 resulted in a further decline of the United States' reputation and influence within the region. Hamas's triumph in 2006 and its coup d'état in Gaza resulted in a severe divide within Palestine. This was concurrent with the fact that Iraq was already on the brink of a civil and a sectarian war and the fact that Iran's regional influence augmented. Faced by those facts, the Bush administration had to adjust its negligent policy towards the Israeli-Palestinian conflict into more involvement, through Annapolis conference, which was overdue and even delivered modest results.¹⁶⁸

In addition, the European and Arab allies' influence on the United States was also remarkable. As a result of the far-reaching sectarian attacks in Iraq, the Arab states, particularly Saudi Arabia and Jordan, pledged to help the United States in return for an American resuscitation of the peace process.¹⁶⁹ The United States was also driven by a desire to attain the moderate Arab states' assistance to restrain the rising Iranian defiant and its pursuit to be a nuclear power.¹⁷⁰ Furthermore, regional changes were developing in the Middle East. According to the West's perception, the extremist camp of states and non-state actors (Iran, Syria, Hezbollah, and Hamas) formed an alliance against the moderate camp (Egypt, Saudi Arabia, Jordan, and the Fatah government in the West Bank). This meant that the sway and the credibility of the United States in the Middle East were on the wane versus the non-state actors and the extremist camp. In that sense, the Annapolis conference aimed at large to strengthen the regional moderate camp versus the regional extremist camp and to strengthen the Fatah government and President Abbas in the West Bank versus the Hamas government in the Gaza Strip.¹⁷¹

As for the European Union, it fully embraced the American "West Bank first strategy" after Hamas seized power, a strategy which basically intended to isolate Hamas. While the United States sought to topple the Hamas regime, most European states hoped that Hamas might change its extremist behavior in respect to Israel.¹⁷² Although some European member states considered talking to Hamas, they went along with the United States' isolationist policy.¹⁷³ The

¹⁶⁸ Sasnal, "U.S. Policy: Between Bush and Obama," 35.

¹⁶⁹ Ibid., 40.

¹⁷⁰ Migdalovitz, "Peace Process: the Annapolis Conference," 1.

¹⁷¹ Malmvig, "In the Midst of Change: US and Middle East," 12-22.

¹⁷² O'Donnell, "EU, Israel and Hamas," 11.

¹⁷³ Maria Gianniou, "The Policies of the Mediterranean EU Countries towards the Israeli-Palestinian Conflict: Leaders or Followers?" (paper prepared for "the Euro-Mediterranean Partnership (EMP): Perspectives from the Mediterranean EU Countries, Rethimon, Crete, 25-27 October 2007), 12.

European position was mainly a result of “US pressure” and Europe was even going to depart from its long-term strategy of “dialogue” instead of isolation with “rogue” regimes as well as from its “democratization project” in the Middle East.¹⁷⁴

There are three examples to signify the US leader-EU follower model with respect to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. The first was that after Israel’s military incursion to Gaza in 2006, some European states attempted to initiate a European initiative to resolve the conflict but failed to secure the “support” of the European “Council” and the initiative was bogged down.¹⁷⁵ The second was that the Quartet was mainly driven by the United States. In 2002, when Arafat was in power, the Quartet aimed at empowering the Palestinian prime minister’s authorities at the expense of the president’s authorities. In 2006, after Hamas seized power, the Quartet sought to empower President Abbas at the expense of the Hamas government.¹⁷⁶ The third was that the Bush administration appointed “Tony Blair as a representative of the Middle East Quartet” unilaterally and without any discussion with the Europeans.¹⁷⁷ Nevertheless, out of the geographical proximity and the mounting repercussions of the stalemate in the conflict after Hamas seized Gaza in 2007, the European states urged the United States to re-launch the peace process in Annapolis. Yet, Europe remained satisfied with its complementary role in the Quartet. This became mainly apparent in the “EU Action plan for the Middle East Peace Process” in October 2007.¹⁷⁸

¹⁷⁴ Sven Biscop, “For A ‘More Active’ EU in The Middle East: Transatlantic Relations and Strategic Implications of Europe’s Engagement with Iran, Lebanon and Israel-Palestine” (Egmont, Royal Institute for International Relations, Brussels, March 2007), 14.

¹⁷⁵ Musu, “EU and the Peace Process: A Balance,” 27-28.

¹⁷⁶ Sayign, “Inducing a Failed State in Palestine,” 23-24.

¹⁷⁷ Moller, “EU Middle East Policy under German Leadership,” 4.

¹⁷⁸ Perthes, “Beyond Peace: Israel, the Arab World, and Europe,” 3.

▪ Neo-Liberal Explanations of Transatlantic Policies towards the Conflict (2000-2008)

During the two terms of the Bush administration, the ideology of the neo-conservatives, the Israeli lobby and Congress were among the driving forces behind the American policies towards the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. As for the neo-conservatives, they believed that democracy should be first delivered to the Middle East by toppling rogue regimes such as Iraq and Iran; in that case the Palestinian-Israeli conflict would be easily resolved. This policy was characterized by the neo-conservative saying that the most apt road to “Jerusalem runs through Bagdad.”¹⁷⁹ The Bush administration, dominated by the neo-cons, was convinced that it was the “Palestinian violence” and not the “Israeli policies” that troubled the Middle East peace process and that a democratization of the Palestinians was a prerequisite for preliminary talks. The neo-cons, who had had special relations with Israel since the Regan administration, explicitly preferred the extremist wing within Israel, refused any “Israeli concessions,” and denied all privileges to the Palestinians.¹⁸⁰

This explained the fact that the Bush administration pursued a policy of regime change within Palestine by sidelining if not removing Arafat and strengthening Abbas as Prime Minister and postulated Palestinian political and economic reforms in order to put the envisaged Palestinian state into practice.¹⁸¹ In fact, there was a division over Arafat within the first Bush administration. The hawks opted for a removal of Arafat, which the doves refused. A middle ground solution, materialized by Rice, was to create a “prime minister position” and to grant him greater authority at the expense of President Arafat.¹⁸²

Another division appeared within the first Bush administration with respect to the Palestinian-Israeli conflict. Whereas Secretary of State Colin Powell strongly favored a “creation of a Palestinian state,” Secretary of Defense Donald H. Rumsfeld and Vice President Dick Cheney were reluctant to engage in the conflict. This struggle was decided in favor of the hawks.¹⁸³ Hence, the neo-cons formulated larger parts of the Bush agenda towards the Middle

¹⁷⁹ Kenneth. M. Pollack, “The Seven Deadly Sins of Failure in Iraq. A Retrospective Analysis of the Reconstruction. Middle East,” *Review of International Affairs* 10, no. 4 (December 2006), 2, http://www.brookings.edu/articles/2006/12iraq_pollack.aspx.html.

¹⁸⁰ Christison “All Those Old Issues: Bush and the Palestinian Conflict,” 40-42.

¹⁸¹ Malmvig, “In the Midst of Change: US and Middle East,” 8.

¹⁸² Candace Karp, “The Bush Administration and Its Policy on Palestine: Opportunities Scorned,” *Palestinian-Israeli Journal* 11, no. 2 (2004): 99.

¹⁸³ Mira Sucharow, “Constructions of Solidarity: the US and the EU in the Israeli-Palestinian Conflict,” in: *National Interest and International Solidarity: Particular and Universal Ethics in International Life*, eds. Jean-Marc Coincaud and Nicholas J. Wheeler (Tokyo: United Nations University Press, 2008), 154.

East in general and towards the Israeli-Palestinian conflict in particular. They were even behind the genesis of what became known as the “Bush doctrine” in United States foreign policy.¹⁸⁴

The impact of the Israeli lobby, broadly recognized as the IAPAC (the Israeli-American Public Affairs Committee), over the US foreign policy has always been considered as fairly powerful for almost half a century. It benefited from the backing of the “evangelical Christians” as well as its “organizational unity” to heavily support Israel. After the September 11 attacks, it portrayed the security of Israel and the United States at stake and that both were in an existential fight against terrorism in both Afghanistan (Taliban) and Palestine (Hamas).¹⁸⁵ A fierce debate over the Israeli lobby’s influence on the US foreign policy has been recently amplified with the publication of John Mearsheimer’s and Stephen Walt’s book “*The Israeli Lobby and U.S Foreign Policy*.” They argued that the Israeli lobby was the “primary cause of American support for Israel” and that it was harmful to the US interests.¹⁸⁶ Many other pundits, such as Jerome Slater and Robert C. Lieberman, have tried to refute Mearsheimer’s and Walt’s arguments based on a broader explanation of the United States’ “special relationship” with Israel. In other words, they argued that it was not only the Israeli lobby but also the “cultural, religious, and popular” ties between both the American and the Israeli societies that ultimately explain the American support of Israel.¹⁸⁷

Nevertheless, and a-part from this debate the Israeli lobby had its effects on the Bush administration’s policies towards the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. Mearsheimer and Walt argued that the Israeli lobby urged the United States to unconditionally back up Israel on all issues even if the Israeli policies went against the US interests. In addition, they argued that the Israeli lobby reinforced pro-Israel American officials to be either elected to the Congress or selected for the cabinet. For instance, Elliott Abrams, known for his pro-Israel attitude, was appointed to be responsible for the “Middle East Policy at the National Security Council since 2002.” Moreover, the lobby campaigned against the officials who were not pro-Israel.¹⁸⁸

¹⁸⁴ Jim George, “Leo Strauss, Neo-conservatism and US Foreign Policy: Esoteric Nihilism and the Bush Doctrine,” *International Politics* 42 (2005): 174- 175.

¹⁸⁵ Tony Smith, “The Domestic Sources of American Policies on the Middle East Conflict,” in: *German and American Perspectives on Israel, Palestine, And the Middle East Conflict*, eds. Erlanger Steven et.al. (American Institute for Contemporary German Studies, the Johns Hopkins University, AICGS German-American Issue, no. 06, 2006), 17-18.

¹⁸⁶ Robert C. Lieberman, “The ‘Israel Lobby’ and American Politics,” *Perspectives on Politics* 7, no. 2 (2009): 235.

¹⁸⁷ John J. Mersheimer and Stephen M. Walt, “Is it Love or Lobby? Explaining America’s Special Relationship with Israel,” *Security Studies* 18, no. 1 (2009): 58.

¹⁸⁸ *Ibid.*, 64-66.

Mearsheimer and Walt gave two examples to emphasize the great influence of the Israeli lobby over the Bush administration. The first was in 2002, when Bush asked Sharon to halt the Israeli settlements; yet, he later had to withdraw his request under the pressure of Congress. Ever since the Israeli occupation of the Palestinian territories in 1967, all the American presidents opposed the Israeli settlement activities. All of them, including George W. Bush, attempted to bring the Israeli settlement activities to an end but their endeavor always failed as a result of the Israeli lobby. Although the administration of the elder Bush threatened to suspend “an Israeli request for \$10 billion in loan guarantees in 1992,” it eventually released the loan guarantees and the Israeli settlements rapidly increased. Accordingly, the George W. Bush administration remained silent on the Israeli settlement activities until the end of its second term. Even when the Bush administration re-engaged in the conflict in its last year in office, through the “Annapolis conference,” settlements swiftly increased afterwards. The second example was in 2002 when Sharon instigated the “Operation Defensive Shield” against almost all of the West Bank, and Bush asked Sharon to pull the Israeli troops out at the beginning of April. However, Bush had to retreat again; he even defined Sharon as “a man of peace” under the pressure of Congress.¹⁸⁹ The American Congress has always given strong support to the Israeli policies and has always urged the respective administrations to abide by unconditional support to Israel. For instance, at the end of 2001, “89% of the Senate” advocated Israel’s right to strike back relentlessly on “Palestinian terrorism” and asked Bush not to betray Israel.¹⁹⁰

On the other hand, the European Union continued its dichotomy of acting as a political dwarf and an economic giant in international affairs. Unsurprisingly, the parties involved in the Israeli-Palestinian conflict still perceived the European Union’s role as marginal and largely of an economic nature. This was basically because of the “intergovernmental” nature of the European Common and Security Foreign policy (ECSFP). In other words, because the European member states have always been reluctant to relinquish their sovereignty to the CFSP, the “national” foreign policies of the member states were the driving force in addressing the Palestinian-Israeli conflict.¹⁹¹ For instance, domestic and historical rationales pushed “France, Ireland, Italy and Greece” to traditionally support the Palestinian rights, where “Germany, the

¹⁸⁹ Ibid., 67-69.

¹⁹⁰ Dana H. Allin and Steven Simon, “The Moral Psychology of US Support for Israel,” *Survival* 45, no. 3 (2003): 130.

¹⁹¹ Hubel, “Israeli-Palestinian Conflict in the EU-US Relations,” 31.

Netherlands, Denmark, the UK” conventionally supported Israel. Therefore, the rule was that the Europeans were divided with respect to the Palestinian- Israeli conflict and the exceptions were the European Union’s declarations which have always reflected minimum common positions.¹⁹² Germany, for example, had promoted “special” economic and political relations with Israel because of the Germany’s sense of guilt for genocide of the European Jews.¹⁹³

Secondly, although Italy has always been traditionally pro-Arab, when the Berlusconi government was elected, the pendulum turned to full support for the Bush administration as well as for the Sharon government. The Berlusconi government fully embraced the Israeli claims that the “Palestinian violence” and not the Israeli occupation was the reason of the stalemate in the peace process. Unsurprisingly, Italy (Berlusconi) with the support of the United Kingdom (Tony Blair) and the demand of the United States (George W. Bush) convinced the rest of the European member states to brand Hamas as a “terrorist organization” in 2003.¹⁹⁴ Thirdly, Britain has always supported the United States’ control over the peace process and has sought to be a bridge between the European and the American stances. Conversely, France has always pursued for an “independent policy” towards the conflict.¹⁹⁵ Although France has always opted for a pro-Arab stance it also kept a very good relation with Israel. Hence, a European internal division and its diverse national foreign policies were responsible for its marginal role in the Palestinian-Israeli conflict.¹⁹⁶

In addition, changes in the European governments, whether they were pro-American or not, determined the nature of transatlantic policies with respect to the conflict. For instance, Merkel in 2005 and Sarkozy in 2007 made the transatlantic convergence over the Middle East possible and more tangible.¹⁹⁷ This convergence materialized in 2006 when Europe followed the United States’ boycott against Hamas as well as in 2008 when Germany and the Czech Republic fully supported Israel in its military invasion of Gaza. Nevertheless, the diverse European

¹⁹² Altunisik, “EU and the Israeli- Palestinian Conflict,” 117.

¹⁹³ Angelika Timm, “The Influence of Domestic Factors on German Middle East Policy,” in: *German and American Perspectives on Israel, Palestine, And the Middle East Conflict*, eds. Erlanger Steven et.al. (American Institute for Contemporary German Studies, the Johns Hopkins University, AICGS German-American Issue, no. 06, 2006), 13-14.

¹⁹⁴ Raffaella A. Del Sarto and Nathalie Tocci, “Italy’s Politics without Policy: Balancing Atlanticism and Europeanism in the Middle East,” *Modern Italy* 13, no. 2 (2008): 139.

¹⁹⁵ Jonathan Rynhold, “Britain and the Middle East” (the Begin-Sadat Center for Strategic Studies, Bar-Ilan University, June 2006), 25.

¹⁹⁶ Musu, “EU and the Peace Process: A Balance,” 15-16.

¹⁹⁷ Dieter Mahncke, “The United States, Germany and France: Balancing Transatlantic Relations,” *The British Journal of Politics and International Relations* 11, no. 1 (2009): 79-82.

positions, between full support to Israel and relative support to the Palestinian rights, remained the rule and the Europeans accepted the fact that the United States lead and Europe followed. However, the effects of the Muslim Diaspora in Europe also have to be considered. The number of Muslims in Europe is more or less “twenty million.” This explains why it was more urgent for Europeans to solve the Israeli-Palestinian conflict than for the United States.¹⁹⁸

In conclusion, the Bush administration was dominated by the neo-cons and was also affected by the Israeli lobby and the Congress in its policies with respect to the Palestinian-Israeli conflict. The result of those determinants was an American reluctance to genuinely engage in the conflict and a blatant bias towards Israel in its policies for eight years. The European Union, on the other hand, remained marginal in its engagement because of the intergovernmental nature of the CFSP and the different national interests with respect to the conflict. However, the urgency of solving the conflict to the European Union partially emanated from the increasing numbers of Muslims on the European continent.

▪ **Constructivist Explanations of Transatlantic Policies towards the Conflict (2000-2008).**

Unsurprisingly, the Europeans and the Americans differ when it comes to values, public opinion polls, and strategic cultures with respect to the Palestinian-Israeli conflict. Such difference partially explains the different perspectives from which each part looks at the conflict. One of the reasons for the European empathy with the Palestinians at large as well as the American long-standing bias towards Israel is the diverse transatlantic perception towards Israel. For Europeans, Israel should be secure in the Middle East and the Palestinian-Israeli conflict is a “matter of moral equivalence.” Conversely, for the Americans Israel is considered the most trusted “ally” in the Middle East and the sole democratic state surrounded by a circle of dictatorships. Ethical and religious rationales stood behind the American popular support to Israel. The attacks of September 11 even reinforced the solidarity between the two peoples as “common victims” and common fighters against the “radical Islamic terrorism.”¹⁹⁹ Dana H. Allin emphasized this, noting that “Israel, in Bush’s view, was a country that had taken a premature risk for peace and been rewarded with violence.”²⁰⁰

¹⁹⁸ Robin Shepherd, *A State beyond the Pale: Europe’s Problem with Israel* (London: Weidenfeld and Nicolson, 2009), 167.

¹⁹⁹ Gary L. Geipel, “America and Europe on the Middle East: What Divides Us?,” in: *Conflicts in the Greater Middle East and the Transatlantic Relations*, eds. Helmut Hubel and Markus Kaim (Baden-Baden: Nomos Verlagsgesellschaft, 2004), 200- 201.

²⁰⁰ Allin, “Moral Psychology of US Support for Israel,” 130.

Another reason for the different perspectives on both sides of the Atlantic is the diverse transatlantic stance on the role of religion in the conflict. While the Europeans are largely “secular,” and even consider religion as a hazard, most Americans strongly appreciate the role of the religion in their life.²⁰¹ In fact, religious beliefs played a significant role in the American support to Israel in general and in the Bush administration’s vision of the conflict in particular. In the bible Israel is the “promised land” and, according to the beliefs of some fundamentalist groups, “the return of the Jews” to the ancient land is a prerequisite to the “return of Christ and the end of the world.”²⁰² This vision was strongly embraced by the Bush administration: Israel was the place where a large war –Armageddon– would be conducted and the return of Christ heavily depended on the existence of Israel.²⁰³ “Evangelical Christianity” is a clear-cut example of the strong ties of the “Judeo-Christian ethic” rooted within US society. Evangelicals and the Christian-right have gained increasing political power on the American political scene. They constitute about “11% of the electorate in the United States.” Bush had taken this into consideration when he was addressing the Palestinian-Israeli conflict.²⁰⁴

The public opinion in both Europe and the United States with respect to the Palestinian-Israeli conflict is palpably different. While most of the Europeans are generally pro-Arab and put the “blame” on Israel, most of the Americans are pro-Israel and put the blame on the Arabs and the Palestinians. Public opinion polls in both the United States and Europe provide tangible evidence for this.²⁰⁵ Accordingly, one of the explanations of Bush’s ultimate support for Israel during his two terms was the fact that the idea of the “Jewish state” was highly welcomed within American society and that the support for Israel in public opinion polls “reached the highest level ever, and remained there throughout Bush’s two terms.”²⁰⁶

The strategic culture of both the United States and Europe is also of great significance for explaining the transatlantic politics vis-à-vis the Palestinian-Israeli conflict. American strategic culture is based on “moral and ethical principles: liberty, democracy, self-determination, and Judeo-Christian morality.” Those principles formed the American identity through which the

²⁰¹ Geipel, “America and Europe: What Divides Us?,” 202.

²⁰² Walter Russell Mead, “The New Israel and the Old: Why Gentile Americans Back the Jewish State,” *Foreign Affairs* 87, no. 4 (2008): 30.

²⁰³ Allin, “Moral Psychology of US Support for Israel,” 137.

²⁰⁴ Sucharow, “Solidarity: US and EU in the Israeli-Palestinian Conflict,” 159-160.

²⁰⁵ Emanuele Ottolenghi, “Israel, Europe and the US: Accounting for Transatlantic Disagreements over the Middle East” (the Begin-Sadat Center for Strategic Studies, Bar-Ilan University, June 2006), 7-8.

²⁰⁶ Mead, “New Israel and Old: Gentile Americans,” 29.

Palestinian-Israeli standoff was addressed. In the context of Bush's global war on terrorism, the United States saw itself in the same boat with Israel as victims and strugglers against terrorism whether in Afghanistan or in Palestine. Israel is perceived in the US as the sole democracy in the Middle East and the place of the Christ's return that should be ultimately secured and supported.²⁰⁷ In conjunction with the American fascination with protecting Israeli democracy, the United States gives high esteem to the utilization of "military force" as an indispensable tool to protect its principles and "values." This partially explained the Bush administration's blind eye to the Israeli use of its military force against the Palestinians and its consideration that Israel has the ultimate right to defend itself and its values. In addition, the United States feels analogous to Israel in its "national" character and its "historical" inception as a group of settlers who migrated from Europe after they were being "persecuted."²⁰⁸

Unlike the United States, the European Union's strategic culture is anchored in diplomacy, "international law, support of democracy, rule of law, human rights, peaceful solutions of conflicts," and the attraction to soft power versus hard power.²⁰⁹ The crux of the European Union is also founded on the "principle of no more war" and the view that "nationalism and religion" have been responsible for the wars and the upheavals within Europe. Consequently, the notion of Europe is to craft a "war free-zone" where "economic prosperity" prevails and where states voluntarily relinquish parts of their sovereignty for a post-national entity. This partially explained the European eagerness to back up the "Oslo and Madrid" accords because they would "create a new Europe in the Middle East."²¹⁰ This also explained the European vision of the Palestinian state as "viable, democratic, sovereign, and based on the 1967 borders" compared to a less detailed American vision that concentrated on replacement of "leaders, institutions, security arrangements" as a precondition for a provisional Palestinian state as the Bush administration explicitly mentioned.²¹¹

The weakness and inefficiency of the European Union and its submission to the United States lead in the Palestinian-Israeli conflict is derived from its strategic culture which makes Europe prefer what is doable to what is best, prefer prolonged discussions more willingly than

²⁰⁷ Sucharow, "Solidarity: US and EU in the Israeli-Palestinian Conflict," 155-159.

²⁰⁸ Shepherd, *A State beyond the Pale: Europe's Problem with Israel*, 249-250.

²⁰⁹ Altunisik, "EU and the Israeli- Palestinian Conflict," 118.

²¹⁰ Ottolenghi, "Israel, Europe and the US: Transatlantic Disagreements," 14.

²¹¹ Sucharow, "Solidarity: US and EU in the Israeli-Palestinian Conflict," 166.

swift resolutions, and to “act through strict consensus.”²¹² This also explained the fact that Europe’s role in the Palestinian-Israeli conflict was strictly confined to a diplomatic and economic back-up of the United States’ dominating role in the conflict, the use of its “soft power” to reconstruct the Palestinian infrastructure that Israel demolished, and the financial support of the Palestinian authority in order to keep it from collapsing. It furthermore explained the European compliance with the United States’ resolution to list Hamas as a terrorist group in 2003 and to isolate a democratically elected government led by Hamas since 2006.²¹³

▪ **Rationales behind Obama’s Aggressive Engagement and Europe’s Support.**

Neo-realist explanations for the Obama administration’s aggressive engagement in the Palestinian-Israeli conflict revolved mainly around the inheritance of the Bush administration’s eight years of in the Middle East policies. Obama inherited two wars in Afghanistan and Iraq, an increasing Iranian nuclear threat, a domestic and global economic “recession,” and a mounting erosion of the credibility the hegemony of the United States’ in the world, particularly in the Middle East. This prompted the former Secretary of State Madeline Albright to argue that “many Presidents inherit[ed] headaches, [but] Barak Obama has inherited the whole emergency room.”²¹⁴

Therefore, in its endeavor to restore American benign leadership around the globe in general and in the Middle East in particular, the Obama administration vigorously engaged in the conflict from the outset. This endeavor was based on finding that a resolve of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict was the key to regain lost US “reputation” as a honest broker and to repair its spoiled image in the region. That explained the fact that Obama appointed George Mitchell as a permanent and a prominent envoy to the conflict two days after he took office.²¹⁵ Besides, the Obama administration believed that resolving the conflict would diminish the terrorist attacks and the “anti-American” sentiments in the Middle East, erode the sway of Iran and extremist

²¹² Asle Toje, *America, the EU and Strategic Culture: Renegotiating the Transatlantic Bargain* (London and New York: Routledge Taylor & Francis Group, 2008), 147.

²¹³ Ibrahim Kalin, “Israel and Palestine: Trauma, Truth and Politics,” in: *the Obama Moment: European and American Perspectives*, eds. Alvaro De Vasconcelos and Marcin Zaborowski (Paris: the European Union Institute for Security Studies, 2009), 179-180.

²¹⁴ Thomas Omestad, “For President-Elect Barak Obama, the Urgent Demands of a Perilous Word,” *Us News Politics*, December 23, 2008.

²¹⁵ Alon. Ben- Meir, “Negotiating an Israeli-Palestinian Breakthrough,” *Middle East Policy* 16, no.1 (2009): 57.

non-state actors such as Hezbollah and Hamas, as well as lead to an overwhelming support from the Arab states to calm down the troubles in Iraq and Afghanistan.²¹⁶

This explained the fact that Obama administration unprecedentedly recognized that the resolution of the Palestinian Israeli conflict was in the American national interest. It was therefore unsurprising that the Commander of the US Forces in Afghanistan and Iraq, General David Petraeus, argued that the safety of the American troops was jeopardized by the stalemate of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict following the Israeli provocative “announcement” of its intention to ‘build 1600 housing units in East Jerusalem.’ General Petraeus also argued in his testimony before the “Senate Armed Services Committee” that “the enduring hostilities between Israel and some of its neighbors present distinct challenges to [the US’s] ability to advance [its] interests [in the Middle East]” and that the “Arab anger over the Palestinian question” undermines the United States’ relations with the Arab states and damages the “legitimacy of moderate Arab leaders.”²¹⁷

In brief, the American desire to solve the Iranian predicament, end the Afghanistan and Iraq wars and restore its good relations with the Muslim and the Arab world relied heavily on attaining a breakthrough in the Palestinian-Israeli conflict. This explained the cleavages that embarked between the Obama administration and the Netanyahu government over the two-state solution and the settlements issue. Netanyahu refusal of the American request to freeze Israeli settlement construction led to tensed relations between the United States and Israel and significantly hampered the peace process.

The Neo-liberalist explanations of the aggressive Obama engagement are a mixture of chances for and constraints on his administration. As for the chances, in 2009 Obama was still popular with the electorate and enjoyed a rock-solid majority in Congress, “with 257 out 435 seats in the House of Representatives and 59 out of 100 seats in the Senate.”²¹⁸ In addition, although American public opinion has always been supporting Israel at the expense of the Palestinians, a majority of the Americans are supporting Obama’s even-handed approach in the conflict. For instance, a “Pew Reach Center poll” in June 2009 revealed that two-third of the Americans believed that Obama made the right decisions in addressing the Middle East conflict.

²¹⁶ Omestad, “Obama, Urgent Demands,” 4.

²¹⁷ DeWayne Wickham, “Israel Insults the U.S. With Go-It-Alone Tactics,” *US Today*, March 30, 2010.

²¹⁸ Economist Intelligence Unit, “Outlook For 2010-11,” United Kingdom Report, October 2010, 4, http://graphics.eiu.com/upload/eb/global_economic_forecast.pdf.

Another poll in the same month stated that only “46% of the Americans” believed that Israel was really dedicated to the peace process compared to “66%” in December 2008.²¹⁹ Besides, the Obama Administration’s members were obviously neutral and embraced the “smart power” ideology. Most of the Administration’s prominent figures such as Robert Gates and James Jones, along with Obama, believed that Washington would never be able to attain its interests in the Middle East without an aggressive engagement in the Israeli-Palestinian conflict.²²⁰

On the other hand, domestic constraints on the Obama administration are also significant. The American congress has traditionally been an ultimate supporter of Israel. For instance, when George W.H. Bush attempted in 1991-1992 to compel Israel to halt settlements construction through halting its loan guarantees, Congress heavily criticized him and ultimately supported Israel. Unsurprisingly, an identical pressure was put on the Obama administration. At the end of May 2009, a bi-partisan memo from the Democratic majority leader and the Republican minority leader was sent to the White House asking the President not to put pressure on Israel regarding the settlement activities. The memo “was signed by 329 of 435 members in the House of Representatives” and an identical memo was “signed by 76 of 100 members in the Senate.” Later on, it was discovered that the memo was “drafted” by the “American-Israeli Public Affairs Committee (AIPAC).”²²¹

From a neo-realistic perspective, Europe enthusiastically supported the Obama administration’s engagement in the conflict based on the facts that its political weight in the globe was extremely diminishing. Therefore, getting along with the United States over the Palestinian-Israeli conflict would be a European pretext to entrust the US its “strategic responsibilities” whether regionally or globally.²²² This was evident when Jeremy Shapiro and Nick Witney argued that “despite their determination to be diplomatically involved in the Middle East peace process, whether as individual states or through the EU, they in practice confined their role to exhorting the US to be more active and to writing cheques.” Additionally, an increasing splitting up among the European member states over the Middle East peace process turned out to be more evident than before. Therefore, Europe preferred to hide itself behind both the United States’ leadership and its membership the “Quartet.” However, the genuine rationale

²¹⁹ Indurthy, “Obama: Opportunities and Constrains,” 20-21.

²²⁰ Berger, “Between New Hopes and Old Realities- Obama Administration,” 25-28.

²²¹ Indurthy, “Obama: Opportunities and Constrains,” 23.

²²² Romano Prodi et.al, “Europe and World Governance: Reshaping EU-US Relations: A Concept Paper” (Report of a Task Force, Notre Europe, Studies and Research 75, November 2009), 12-13.

behind the European support to the United States in the Middle East peace process was the American and Israeli reluctance to any European autonomous action in the conflict.²²³

Moreover, solving the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, as Obama envisaged, was a pressing European “strategic priority” because of its geographical proximity to the Middle East and the direct effect of any troubles in the Middle East on the European security whether through terrorist attacks or the Muslim and Arab migrants in Europe.²²⁴ Therefore, the European Union thought to be a “facilitator” of Obama’s endeavor to solve the conflict. This was evident in the French proposal, in the aftermath of the Obama’s election, of a regional and global closer transatlantic cooperation, particularly in the Middle East.²²⁵

From a neo-liberal perspective, Europe supported Obama because he in fact adopted the priorities and the values that the Europeans have always been calling for with respect to the conflict. Likewise, the popularity of the Obama foreign policy reached its acme in Europe to the extent that it exceeded his predecessor by “four times” in 2008. Therefore, the European desire for the American leadership increased rapidly “from 33% in 2008 to 49% in 2009.”²²⁶

Lastly, from a constructivist perspective, although Europe has “multiple identities vis-à-vis the United States” ranges from “bilateral” to “defence and security” relations, Europeans, whether they were “academics” or intellectuals, highly perceived the transatlantic relationship as the cornerstone of their security as well as their identity. This was evident in Jeremy Shapiro and Nick Witney’s assessment of 27 European states following personal interviews with European intellectuals that:

Europeans base their views about the transatlantic relationship not on a cold calculation of their interests but on national stories they tell themselves about their place in the world.

Therefore, conciliation rather than “confrontation” with the United States was the European option. Europe only needed to be “consulted” by the United States and that the Obama administration carried this out very well and Europe responded in a very positive way.

²²³ Shapiro, “Towards A Post-American Europe,” 14.

²²⁴ Alvaro De Vasconcelos and Marcin Zaborowski, eds., “The EU and the World in 2009: European Perspectives on the New American Foreign Policy Agenda” (ISS Report, European Union Institute for Security Studies, no.4, January 2009), 24.

²²⁵ Sasnal, “U.S. Policy: Between Bush and Obama,” 55-56.

²²⁶ Marcin Zaborowski, “Capitalizing On Obamamania: How to Reform EU-US Relations?,” in: *the Obama Moment: European and American Perspectives*, eds. Alvaro De Vasconcelos and Marcin Zaborowski (Paris: the European Union Institute for Security Studies, 2009), 229-230.

Conclusion:

Historically, the United States and Europe's relationship with respect to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict was recognized as a pattern of a leader-follower. In the aftermath of the 1967 war, the United States took the lead and turned to be Israel's chief ally. Europe issued declarations in 1973 and 1980 in favor of the Palestinians rights which were perceived negatively by both the United States and Israel. Therefore, the United States constantly refused any European independent role in the conflict and so did Israel. From 2000 until 2002, the Bush administration adopted a hands-off policy towards the Palestinian-Israeli conflict, whereas Europe called for a further American engagement. Meanwhile, the European Union was further involved in the conflict through its membership in the Quartet, albeit without a genuine political influence. The Bush administration fully believed that its role in the conflict was confined merely to be a facilitator. The Bush administration also fully embraced the Israeli government's position which refused any negotiations before the Palestinians wipe out the violence completely and argued that the Palestinians were only responsible for the conflict. With the Bush administration's shift of attention towards El Qaeda, Afghanistan, and Iraq, the Palestinian-Israeli conflict was extremely marginalized.

Nonetheless, the Bush administration had to rhetorically re-engage in the conflict only in the framework of its global war on terrorism and its preparations to conquer Afghanistan and Iraq. Therefore, Bush adopted, for the first time in the American history, a two-state solution, and later on the Quartet and Road Map materialized in 2002. Concomitantly, Bush postulated a democratization of Palestine, an alternative Palestinian leadership, and a complete obliteration of the Palestinian terrorism. In other words, Bush believed that democracy precedes any horizon of a political settlement of the conflict. Europe joined the Quartet under a European acquiescence to the United States' leadership in order to attain a political role in the conflict. Nevertheless, the Quartet was controlled by the United States and the Road Map was designed consistently with Israeli terms. In other words, Bush embraced Sharon's vision and the Road Map implementation was not an American priority. Both Europe and the United States endorsed the Gaza disengagement and Europe played a significant role in the Palestinian-Israeli agreement of Movement and access in 2005 and was even assigned for the first time of a security role by deploying two ESDP missions in Palestine.

Hamas's victory in the Palestinian legislative elections represented a crossroads. Palestinian elections were free and fair but neither the United States nor Europe was ready to accept the outcome because Hamas was listed in both Europe and the United States as a terrorist organization. The Quartet listed three conditions that Hamas should meet in order to deal with; to recognize Israel, to wipe out terrorism, and to endorse the previous agreements between the Palestinian authority and Israel. Faced by Hamas's rejection, Europe, the United States, and Israel launched a regional and international isolation policy against Hamas parallel with empowering Abbas and Fatah. As a result of the transatlantic isolation policy, political polarization augmented between Fatah and Hamas and political and military divisions materialized between Hamas and Gaza in 2007. In the aftermath of Hamas-Fatah political division in 2007, both Europe and the United States adopted the West Bank first strategy that implied isolating Hamas and empowering Fatah and Abbas. The Annapolis conference in 2007 came in the context of the West Bank first strategy with zero results on the ground. In the Gaza war 2008-2009, the Bush administration fully and unconditionally supported the Israeli attack, whereas Europe was divided and ineffective and the war resulted in empowering the extremists in both Israel (Netanyahu government) and Palestine (Hamas gained more political weight and popularity).

Obama came to power in 2009 with an aggressive engagement policy towards the conflict combined with an enthusiastic European support; however he was faced by two extremist powers in both Israel and Palestine. The Obama administration believed that the resolution of the Palestinian-Israeli conflict was the key to solve the rest of the Middle East issues. This was manifested in his speech that he delivered at Cairo University by arguing that the Palestinian problem is the origin of all troubles in the Middle East. A fierce dispute between the Obama administration and Netanyahu government embarked over the two-state solution and the settlements construction.

Neo-realist reasons of the transatlantic policies towards the conflict from 2000 until 2008 (Bush's era) revolved mainly around the Bush's initial reluctance to engage in the conflict. However, the Bush administration was forced to rhetorically engage in the conflict as a bargaining chip with both Europe and the Arabs in order to secure their support in its global war against terrorism and its preparation to the war in Iraq. Nonetheless, in real politics the Bush

administration's relations with Sharon's government reached its peak and Bush adopted the Sharon's vision literally and gave him a letter of guarantees in 2004.

On the other hand, the European Union always endorsed the complementary role to the United States in the Palestinian-Israeli conflict. However, no sooner the peace process reached an impasse and the Bush administration adopted the hands off policy that Europe sought for a bigger political role in the conflict. Therefore, under the American approval the EU joined the Quartet and participated in principle in drafting the Road Map. Nevertheless, the European engagement in the conflict was marginal in essence because there was no unified CFSP, and both the United States and Israel remained reluctant to give Europe a tangible role. Even the Quartet was actually dominated by the United States. For instance, the Quartet drafted the Road Map but it was not released until it is re-drafted according to Israeli terms and it was even not realized until Palestine implemented a democratization process according to the American perspective and furthermore it was unilaterally released by the United States and not by the Quartet. Nevertheless, Europe's political role increased in the conflict in the aftermath of the Gaza disengagement 2005-2006 and deployed two ESDP missions because the military component of the CFSP increased, and the transatlantic rift over Iraq was being healed after Bush was re-elected. Furthermore, Europe accepted to play the follower role to the United States, therefore Israel permitted Europe for the first time in history to perform a security role in the conflict.

The situation in the Middle East went against the grain of the United States' interests between 2005 and 2007. In a sense, the American predicament in Iraq and Afghanistan augmented, the Israeli-Lebanese war in 2006, Hamas's victory in 2006, Palestinian division in 2007, and the turning of the scene of the Middle East into a conflict between extremists and moderates pushed the Bush administration to engage further in the Palestinian-Israeli conflict through the Annapolis conference in the context of the West-Bank first strategy. The European Union fully embraced the West-Bank first strategy under the pressure of both the United States and the moderate Arab states. Therefore, Europe remained in the leader-follower the pattern. Three examples were noticeably brought up; the first was that Europe could not have an autonomous initiative for solving the peace process, the second the Quartet was mainly controlled by the United States and third the appointment of Tony Blair by the United States as a Special Envoy of the Quartet was unilaterally acted without any consultation with Europe.

Neo-Liberalist reasons of the transatlantic policies towards the conflict from 2000 until 2008 (Bush's era) revolved mainly around the neo-cons ideology, the Jewish lobby and Congress in the United States. The neo-cons believed that democracy precedes any peaceful settlement and that the Palestinian violence, not Israel's policies, was the genuine reason for the stalemate in the peace process. Therefore, the Bush administration adopted a regime change policy in Palestine. Likewise, the Jewish lobby and Evangelical-Christians played a significant role by portraying that both the United States and Israel were victims and in a common war against terrorism (Taliban and Hamas). Moreover, the American congress has always been an ultimate supporter to the Israeli interests. As for Europe, the dichotomy of being an economic colossal and at the same time a political dwarf remained the chief landmark. It was also the intergovernmental nature of Europe. In other words, the CFSP in the Palestinian-Israeli conflict was in fact under the control of the national foreign policies of the EU member states. Moreover, the Atlanticism versus the Europeanism of the European governments was also a driving factor in their relations with the United States. Germany led by Merckel, and France led by Sarkozy were tangible evidences.

Constructivist reasons of the transatlantic policies towards the conflict from 2000 until 2008 (Bush's era) revolved mainly around values, public opinion, and Strategic culture of the both the United States and Europe. In a sense, both Europe and the United States perceived Israel differently. Therefore, the American support to Israel was higher than that of Europe. Likewise, the role of religion in the conflict was very decisive in the United States compared to Europe. Therefore, the Bush administration and the American society heavily supported the Jewish state because it was the land of the return of the Christ. Moreover, unlike Europe, the United States identity defined itself as being in the same boat with Israel in fighting against the Islamic fundamentalism and that the use of the military force was a value to eradicate the terrorists' threat.

Neo-realistic rationales behind Obama's aggressive engagement in the conflict revolved around his administration's desire to get rid of the eight years of Bush's legacy. In other words, the United States was highly restrained and even stretched by two wars, faced by an augment Iranian menace, domestic and a global depression, and most notably a dwindle in the reputation and the reliability of the United States in the globe and in the Middle East. For those reason, finding a solution to the Middle East peace process was a tool in the Obama's administration to

restore US lost hegemony in the Middle East as well as to solve the other crises such as the Iranian nuclear threat and the terrorist threats. Therefore, the Obama administration considered finding a solution to the Palestinian-Israeli conflict and establishing a Palestinian state an American national interest. From a neo-liberal Perspective, Obama was faced by a mixture of chances and constraints. In a sense, Obama enjoyed a huge popularity within the United States and had the majority in Congress. In addition, the Administration team was known of being pragmatic and neutral and they even espoused the smart power ideology that combines between diplomacy and hard power. However, Obama administration was always constrained by the ultimate support of Congress to Israel's actions, and by the Israeli lobby.

Lastly, from a neo-realist perspective, Europe enthusiastically supported Obama's engagement in the Middle East peace process because of its relative power decrease in the globe. Therefore, getting along with the United States would be an alibi to put its strategic burdens on the US shoulders. In addition, the increase of the European internal division over the Palestinian-Israeli conflict pushed Europe also to follow the United States. It was also because neither Israel nor the United States would have allowed Europe to have any role in the conflict, unless it gets along with the American plans. Besides, the resolution of the conflict was a European strategic priority because of the geographical proximity and the Muslim migrants in Europe. From a neo-liberal perspective, Obama embraced the same European values and priorities with respect to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict and he even had a huge popularity in Europe that exceeded his predecessor by four times. From a constructivist perspective, although Europe has different identities towards the United States, most of the Europeans perceive the transatlantic alliance as indispensable.

Part Two:

Arab Elite Perception of Transatlantic Policies towards the Arab region: Egypt and Jordan

Questionnaire Answers:

Bush's and EU'S Policies

Convergence or Divergence

Bush's First and Second Term

Transatlantic Tools, Interests, or Both

Internal Change within US and EU

The Three Case Studies

Obama's Image

Egyptian and Jordanian Perceptions

Chapter Six:

Different Perception, Cynical At Large:

Transatlantic Policies in the Middle East: An Arabic Perspective

In the Middle East, Europe may take different stances from the United States...Nevertheless, at the end of the day and on strategic level European differences with the United States broke on the rock of the European strategic need to the United States.

Mustafa Elwey

When it comes to the Middle East, Europe is the always postponed yes to the United States.

Mustafa El Feqy.

The relationship between the United States and Europe in the Middle East is as the relationship between the car driver (the United States) and the back seat rider who pays the oil's price (Europe).

Mohamed El Oraby

The European foreign policy is the American foreign policy after one hour and it is nothing but a dish washing policy.

Adnaan Hayagna

Europeans and Americans overtly or covertly fully coordinated with each other in addressing the Muslim world.

Osama El Gazaly Harb

▪ Introduction:

This chapter presents a set of influential and prominent figures from the Arabic public sphere and Arabic policy makers based on personal interviews. It aims to examine the Arabic perception of transatlantic convergences and divergences with respect to the Middle East issues. Interviews were conducted in Egypt and Jordan with academics, journalists, diplomats, and politicians. Members of these four categories were presented with a comprehensive questionnaire. Egypt and Jordan were selected because both countries have a peace treaty with Israel, both share boundaries with Israel and Palestine, and both are directly involved in the Arab-Israeli conflict. In addition, both countries are a model for political moderation and balance in the Middle East and both maintain excellent relationships with the United States and Europe. Moreover, the marginal political openness, at least with regard to information availability, allowed the author to freely conduct the personal interviews with prominent figures that had diverse political orientations. This openness in both Egypt and Jordan facilitated the examination of the diverse perceptions of the Arab intellectuals with respect to transatlantic policies in the Middle East.

The author developed specific criteria for each category as a basis for the choice of interview partners. The academics interviewed are political scientists, experts in international relations in general and in American and European policies in specific and come from different universities. The journalists interviewed are experts on the American and European policies in the Middle East and represent different political orientations (pro-government, opposing, and independent). The diplomats interviewed represent prominent ambassadors who served in the United States, Europe, and in Israel. For the selection of politicians, two criteria were applied: the first group is members of political parties, (particularly if they are party experts for foreign relations or members of the foreign relations committee of those parties). The second are parliament members who are experts in foreign affairs (the heads of the foreign affairs committees in respective parliaments).

There was a considerable amount of overlap in the groups of prospective interview partners in both Egypt and Jordan. In other words, it was observed for numerous cases that academics were also politicians, journalists, and sometimes diplomats as well. In that case, the researcher chose the most appropriate and practical category of the respective interview partner. While a prospective interview partner might have also worked as a politician or academic, the

most appropriate and practical description of his professional background was journalist. Accordingly, he was categorized in that category. Based on those criteria, the author conducted 46 interviews in both countries (26 in Egypt and 20 in Jordan).

Admittedly, this is not a representative sample but rather a random selection of Arab intellectuals chosen according to certain criteria in order to cover the diverse Arab perceptions with respect to the transatlantic policies in the Middle East. Based on their answers to a questionnaire this chapter first examines their general perspective towards the Bush administration's policies in the Middle East for eight years; second the chapter scrutinizes Arab perceptions of European policies towards the Middle East in the same period. Third, the chapter provides a statistical and political analysis of Arab perceptions towards the transatlantic convergences and divergences in the Middle East. Fourth, it examines the continuity and change between Bush's first and second term through Arab eyes. Fifth, the chapter asks whether the transatlantic divergences in the Middle East are over interests and goals, over tools, or over both. Finally, the chapter investigates the impact of internal change both within the United States and Europe on their policies in the Middle East from an Arab perspective.

▪ **The Bush Administration's Policies in the Middle East: A Broad Arab Perception.**

When initially questioned about Arab perceptions towards the Bush administration's Middle East policies from 2000 until 2008, the answers ranged from "unfair, imperial, ideological, colonialist, negative, confused, dumped, stupid, militant, catastrophic, identical with the Israeli vision, aggressive, dominating, in a war against terrorism, offensive, utterly biased towards Israel, double standard, opportunist," to controlled by the neo-cons." Interview partners considered it "the main reason behind wars and upheavals in the Middle East, antagonistic towards both the peoples and the governments of the Middle East, unilateralist, designed mainly to empower the American-Israeli domination project over the region, against the United States' foreign policy principles, arrogance of power, a new McCarthyism, meant to remap the region, and a return to the traditional colonization." Israel was seen as "the independent variable in the U.S. policies in the Middle East." The new U.S. national security strategy was seen as going it alone without taking into consideration its European allies or its regional allies in the Middle East, as the worst period of unpopularity toward the United States' foreign policy in the region, and a negative perspective towards Islam and the Arabs. The U.S. engaged in all Middle East

issues from the terrorism angle, ignored the specific foreign policy details of the region, and worked with distorted generalizations.¹

At second glance at the interviews, however, revealed a more differentiated Arab view with both the Egypt and Jordan interview partners. For instance, D. Saed El Lawedny, a journalist and specialist in transatlantic relations and the Middle East, argued that “the United States’ foreign policy in the Bush era was a new American Bonapartism based on a set of uncalculated adventures and that launching wars was its only tool.”² El Lawendy was completely convinced that the United States, as a superpower, wanted to remain the most powerful state on the globe as long as possible. For that reason it sought to dominate the world, extract the wealth of its regions, and inject the resources and wealth of other nations into the veins of its own economy in order to sustain and prolong its hegemony. To prove his point, El Lawendy quoted the words of U.S. Vice President Dick Cheney “We know that our hegemony over the world will not last for a long time so we are trying to prolong this domination as much as we can.” According to El Lawendy, the United States went to Iraq to extract its resources and simultaneously hinder opposing powers such as Iran and China to do the same. El Lawendy also remarked that “the Bush administration perceived the Middle East as nothing but a market for its products and a space to practice its hegemonic policies.”³

The explanation of D. Abd El Monem El Mashaat, professor of international relations and dean of the Political Science Department at the Future University, was quite similar. He asserted that the Bush administration’s policy was very biased and based on a double standard, particularly when it came to Israel, and that it heavily relied on hard (military) power. The Bush policies with respect to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict have augmented extremism and fanaticism in both Israel and Palestine. In addition, the Bush policies towards Iraq have also led to a division within Iraqi society and an increase of violence which bordered on civil war. Moreover, the Bush policies have unconsciously let Iran grow to an influential regional power in the Middle East.⁴

According to former ambassador Nabil Fahmey, the key strategy of the United States’ foreign policy at this period was “a pressing desire to dismantle and divide the Arab world so

¹ The Author conclusion out of 46 interviews.

² Saed El Lawedny, *the Greater Middle East: An American Conspiracy against Arabs* (Cairo: Nahdet Maser for Publishing, Fourth Edition, Trans, June 2009), 47.

³ _____, Interview, Cairo, July 18 2009.

⁴ Abd El Monem El Mashaat, Interview, Cairo, July 6, 2009.

that no one Arab dominating power controls [over] the global energy reserves or even challenges the Israeli power.” Fahmey added that the United States’ foreign policy in this era reached back to deep-rooted causes (energy resources and Israel) that existed long before the September 11 attacks. This era was characterized as a new opportunism used by the neo-cons to accomplish their as well as Israel’s interests. The neo-cons used the September 11 attacks not to convince the other states of the American plans in Iraq but to persuade the American society of the invasion of Iraq. Because Iraq has never been a genuine threat to the United States’ national security, the neo-cons had to galvanize the matter in the context of their global war against terrorism. In this, the United States simultaneously succeeded and failed. In a sense, it succeeded in dividing the Arab world and in leading the Arabic public opinion to question the value of Arab nationalism. On the other hand, it failed to secure the American interests in the region which led to ever-increasing upheavals.⁵

In the same vein, Nabel Zaky of the General Secretariat for political affairs of the El Tagamoh Party attributed the upheavals, wars, instability, insecurity, and the lack of development in the Middle East to Bush’s eight years in the White House. With respect to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, Zaky argued that the United States as the sole superpower in the globe did not impose a final or a comprehensive solution to the conflict for more than 61 years.. The flagrant American bias towards Israel caused a deep suffering of the Arab peoples and a chain of wars, massacres, and migration of millions of Palestinians. With respect to Iran, Zaky asserted that the United States’ policies have eliminated a natural democratic evolution in Iran because they sustained the dictatorship of the Shah and supported ousting a democratically elected government, the Mosadak regime in 1953. President Obama later referred to this as a sort of self-criticism of American politics towards Iran. As for Iraq, it was “the scandal of the century for the United States” because it was revealed that the Bush administration made up pretexts to justify invading Iraq and that its policies have led to a total destruction of Iraq because “more than one million were killed, hundreds of thousands of casualties, and more than four million were deported within or outside Iraq.”⁶

Likewise, former ambassador Gamal Bayomy argued that there was no country more successful than “the United States in the era of Bush in aggregating the hostility and the

⁵ Nabil Fahmey (former ambassador at the United States 2000- 2009), Interview, Cairo, June 21, 2009.

⁶ Nabel Zaky, Cairo, Interview, August 4, 2009.

antagonism of the Arab peoples and governments and that its policies unjustifiably jeopardized the United States' interests in the region." Bayomy depicted the American policies of this era as "a coalition between policy-makers at the White House and the American military-industrial complex within the United States."⁷

Similarly, Ambassador Abd El Raof El Ready argued that "the American foreign policy in the Bush's era was [a] unilateral, disdained dialogue and resorted heavily to military force." El Ready contended that the United States perceived itself as the only power that should decide and that Europe should unquestionably follow. The United States exploited its military force to develop its position as the sole superpower on the globe. This goal was put into practice in its policies towards Iraq and Iran. As for the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, El Ready contended that the American administration began with a hands-off policy because of domestic pressures and a widespread desire not to pressure Israel. However, in the context of the preparations to invade Iraq, the Americans endeavored to demonstrate that they were making an effort in the peace process but in fact it turned out to be nothing more than words and no deeds. That is why El Ready concluded that "in the eight years of the Bush administration diplomacy was weak if not dead, while ideology was the driving force of the American foreign policy."⁸ D. Gamal Abd El Gawad went along with El Ready in confirming the unilateralist nature of the American policies and that did not reflect an accurate vision of the region and negatively affected the American interests.⁹

Ambassador Saed Shalaby viewed the American policies in this period in the context of the American national strategy that followed the September 11 attacks. Shalaby argued that the United States considered the Middle East as a fertile ground breeding the terrorists of the September 11 attacks. In a sense, the political, economic, and social conditions within the Middle East were the source of terrorism and extremism. Thereby, the United States adopted a two-level strategy to confront the sources of terrorism and extremism in the Middle East. The first level was to invade Iraq and Afghanistan, whereas the second level was to promote democracy at the

⁷ Gamal Bayomy (secretary general of the general secretariat of Egyptian European association agreement and a former ambassador in Europe), Interview, Cairo, August 4, 2009.

⁸ Abd El Raof El Ready (former ambassador at the United States and head of the Egyptian Council of foreign affairs), Interview, Cairo, August 5, 2009.

⁹ Gamal Abd El Gawad (head of the center of the strategic and political studies in El Ahram Newspaper), Interview, Cairo, August 5, 2009.

expense of the stability of allied regimes; this explained the frictions between the Bush administration and some moderate states such as Egypt and Saudi Arabia.¹⁰

In contrast, D. Mohamed Selim, professor of political science and international relations at Cairo University, explained the United States' policy in this period with one major aim, "empowering the American-Israeli domination project in the Middle East." Selim contended that with respect to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict the aim was to sustain peaceful settlements, to give Israel more time to complete its settlement activities in the occupied territories, to take the Israeli nuclear activities out of the debate, and to change the strategic and military disequilibrium in favor of Israel. The United States' policy against Iran was part and parcel of the hegemony project because it did not desire a new rival that possessed nuclear capability. In Iraq, the United States applied the same perspective, which was to turn the American political domination into direct occupation. The bottom-line was that "the American policy at this period was a policy of destructive mentality."¹¹

From a revolutionary angle, D. Manar El Shorbagy, professor of political science at the American University in Cairo, argued that "the Bush administration's tenure witnessed a coup d'état in American foreign policy because it rested on ideology, arrogance, and ignorance of the region's details."¹² Likewise, D. Mohamed Abd Ella, head of the committee of foreign affairs of the ruling National Democratic Party, portrayed this period as "a new McCarthyism" and argued that the United States both supported Israel as an arrow to protect its interests in the region and embraced the extremist attitudes within Israel and dedicated all its efforts to implement the Israeli vision.¹³ Likewise, D. Mustafa Elwey, head of the department of political science at Cairo University, contended that the American administration invaded Iraq mainly to use it as "an arrow to entirely control the Middle East."¹⁴

Back to history, D. Osama El Gazaly Harb, head of the El Gabha El Democratya Party (opposition party) and editor-in-chief of *Al Syassa Al Dawlya Review* (Egyptian political review), argued that the Bush administration's policies were an extension of the United States' policies after World War II. In the second half of the twentieth century, the U.S. policies in the Middle East were determined by three factors: oil, Israel, and fighting communism. In the Bush

¹⁰ El Saed Shalaby (executive director of the Egyptian council of foreign affairs), interview, Cairo, August 11, 2009.

¹¹ Mohamed Selim, Interview, Cairo, August 16 2009.

¹² Manar El Shorbagy, Interview, Cairo, August 16, 2009.

¹³ Mohamed Abd Ella, Interview, Cairo, August 16, 2009.

¹⁴ Mustafa Elwey, Interview, Cairo, August 20, 2009.

era, the first two factors remained and the third (communism) faded away and was replaced by “the danger of the extremist and fundamentalist Islam.” Nevertheless, Israel remained “the independent variable” in the U.S. policies towards Iraq, Iran, and Palestine. For example, El Gazaly contended that the driving forces behind the American invasion in Iraq were the special American-Israeli relations and the Israeli fears that Iraq might possess a nuclear capacity.¹⁵ Likewise, Abd El Azem Hamad, editor-in-chief of El Shorouk daily newspaper, argued that “the Bush administration changed its priorities and entered into a direct confrontation with the Islamic world in a childish endeavor to reproduce the traditional colonization.”¹⁶

Strategically, Atef El Gamery outlined a comprehensive vision of the Bush administration’s policies based on its national security strategy released in 2002. According to El Gamery, the first feature of this strategy was that the United States would not allow the emergence of another international or regional power. With respect to the Middle East, the United States aimed to prevent a coherent or a unified region so that the United States’ control and hegemony over the region would not be constrained by a competitive regional power. The second feature was the neo-cons’ special relationship with Israel. The neo-cons had formed an alliance with Israel since the nineteen’s and was consolidated in the twenty-first century, particularly with the Likud Party, and have always refuted any moderate policies by the Labor Party that envisage a possible Palestinian state. The neo-cons overtly argued that the goal of preventing the emergence of any regional power in the Middle East was to empower the Israeli project in the region (the Israeli domination and supremacy). The third feature of the Bush administration’s policies was to change the region’s states from within. In other words, it aimed at changing the cultural identities, political orientations, and social fabrics of the states of the Middle East. El Gamery referred to one of the sayings of the neo-cons that “the war against Iraq is a gate to get into the region and to change the region from within.” For instance, when the United States decided to invade Iraq, it was revealed before the war that the aim was to remap the Middle East with Israel at its strategic center.¹⁷

Likewise, D. Mahmud Abbaza, head of the oppositional Al Wafd Party, paid more attention to the role of the neo-cons and argued that since the United States became the sole superpower, it sought to achieve its interests militarily, unilaterally, and without consulting its

¹⁵ Osama El Gazaly Harb, Interview, Cairo, September 1, 2009.

¹⁶ Abd El Azem Hamad, Interview, Cairo, September 2, 2009.

¹⁷ Atef El Gamery (prominent journalist in El Ahram Newspaper), Interview, Cairo, September 5, 2009.

allies.¹⁸ D. Mustafa El Feqy, head of the Committee of Foreign Affairs at the Egyptian People's Assembly, sufficed to say that this “was the worst period, where the popularity of the United States’ foreign policy largely deteriorated because it encompassed the invasion of Iraq and Afghanistan, a flagrant bias towards Israel, and an utterly animosity towards Arabs and Muslims.” It was Bush who issued his famous expressions of “Islamic fascism and terroristic Islam.”¹⁹

D. Mohamed Kamal, professor of international relations and a member in the Shoura Council focused on the ideological perspective of the Bush administration, arguing that it did not address the Middle East issues as separate issues but instead in the context of the global war against terrorism. The Bush administration paid little interest to the peace process and instead gave priority to the global fight against terrorism.²⁰ Similarly, his colleague D. Motaz Abd El Fatah argued that “the Bush administration lacked a strategy and was even confused between its aims and its tools in the Middle East.”²¹ Likewise, former ambassador Mohamed El Oraby argued that the Bush administration policy in the Middle East was mainly characterized by “an unwarranted ignorance of the region’s details, a superficial generalization, and false premises which led to false results.” El Oraby exemplified this vision by mentioning that he attended a lecture of the former Chief of the CIA in Germany few days before the American invasion to Iraq where he said that “the war against Iraq emanated from the American plans against Germany and Japan during the World War II through attack and then a reconstruction and the Bush administration attempted to apply those plans in the Middle East.”²² As for D. Ali El Dean Helal, professor of political science at Cairo University, he argued that the Bush era reflected resorting to military force, a global war perspective and a feeling that the Palestinian-Israeli settlement was not an urgent requirement.²³

By the same token, D. Sami El Kazendar, professor of political science at the Hashemite University, described this era as “unfair, irrational, and obsessed with impulsive

¹⁸ Mahmud Abbaza, Interview. Cairo, September 7, 2009.

¹⁹ Mustafa El Feqy, Interview, Cairo, September 27, 2009.

²⁰ Mohamed Kama, Interview, Cairo, October 10, 2009. The Shoura Council is the second legislative branch in Egypt.

²¹ Motaz Abd El Fatah (prof of international relations, a visiting prof in Michigan University), Interview, Cairo, December 12, 2009.

²² Mohamed El Oraby (former ambassador to Germany and currently the assistant minister of foreign affairs), Interview, Cairo, December 15, 2009.

²³ Ali El Dean Helal, Interview, Cairo, March 1, 2009.

ideology.” Despite the political institutions of the United States, this era witnessed a heavy reliance on the ideological premises of the President and on ideological powers such as the Christian right and the neo-cons who were heavily associated with the Israeli lobby.”²⁴ The journalist Sood Qobilat also argued that the American policies at this era witnessed a renewal of greedy colonial ambitions in the aftermath of the collapse of the Soviet Union and stressed that the U.S. outlook on the region was dominated by protecting its energy interests and the security of Israel. Hence, all the American policies in the region were to ensure the control of the United States over the region’s wealth and to secure Israel’s existence and supremacy.²⁵

D. Waleed Abu Dalboh, professor of political science at the University of Jordan, attributed the negative and the extremist attitude of the Bush administration largely to the September 11 attacks.²⁶ His colleague D. Ziad Ebadaat affirmed the negative pattern of the American policies in this era, arguing that “the American policies were principally based on ideology rather than on the American national interests.”²⁷ In the same vein, D. Abdullah El Noqrashy argued that these policies could not only be attributed to the American invasion of Iraq, but also to the U.S. exaggeration of the terrorism phenomenon and its deliberate linkage to Islam and Arabs. This has led to a feeling of grievance of both the peoples and the political regimes of the Middle East. Adding fuel was the Arabic perception that the Bush administration had neither a genuine nor a detailed agenda to solve the Palestinian-Israeli conflict and that it rather preferred a sort of crisis management with an absolute bias towards Israel.²⁸

Searching for the Israeli component, D. Gazi Rababaa, professor of political science at the University of Jordan, argued that “the driving force behind the American policies in the Middle East was Israel.” For instance, Israel is now trying to get the United States into a war with Iran under the pretext of its nuclear threat in spite of the fact that the United States’ military power is dwindling. Besides, the religious vision of the Bush administration which was mainly represented in “the belief of the coming of Armageddon and the victory over the Muslim world” played a significant role in Bush’s policies. This led the president to declare a “crusade” and to

²⁴ Sami El Kazendar (prof of political science-the Hashemite University and general director of the academic center for political studies), Interview, Amman, January 17, 2010.

²⁵ Sood Qobilat (head of the Jordanian Writers Association), Interview, Amman, January 17, 2010.

²⁶ Waleed Abu Dalboh, Interview, Amman, January 14, 2010.

²⁷ Ziad Ebadaat, Interview, Amman, January 14, 2010.

²⁸ Abdullah El Noqrashy (prof of political science, dean of faculty of international studies – the University of Jordan), Interview, Amman, January 14, 2010.

create “the slogan of a war against terrorism which is tantamount to a war against Islam.”²⁹ Likewise, former ambassador Hasan Abu Nehmaa agreed that Israel was the independent variable in the American policies in the Middle East arguing that “the American policies are tantamount to the Israeli policies. The United States cannot take a decision, or announce a declaration or a situation without the consent of Israel first. The proof is the fact that Israel played a large role in getting the United States into a war with Iraq in 2003.”³⁰

Likewise, the journalist Amer El Taal argued that the United States utilized the September 11 attacks as a pretext to use its military power to impose its imperial project in the Middle East and to guarantee a lasting supremacy to Israel. In other words, for the U.S, the Middle East was “reduced to two words - Petroleum and Israel.” A part of the American plan to invade Iraq was to impose a “new Staus Quo” in the region through direct conquest of Iraq and fanning internal sectarian clashes, whether in Iraq, Lebanon, or even in Palestine.³¹ His colleague Hazem Ayaad further asserted that the American and the Israeli policies in the Middle East were identical to the extent that it was hard to distinguish who was leading: the United States or Israel.³² D. Adnaan Hyagnaa, professor of political science at Hashemite University, argued in more detail that the United States’ policies with respect to the Palestinian-Israeli conflict were nothing but declaratory policies that played on the emotions of the Arabs, while simultaneously and realistically they were meant to “prolong” the conflict and perceived the conflict as “an endless process.” The invasion of Iraq totally destroyed the infrastructure and the social fabric of the Iraqi society and empowered and emboldened the Iranian influence in the region.³³ Likewise, his colleague D. Hisham Gaseb claimed that the Bush policies led to a “hundred percent increase in the conflicts” and tensions in the Middle East.³⁴

Searching for the neo-con component, D. Ahmed Said Nofaal, professot of political science at Yarmurmouk University, underscored that Bush’s election was meant to implement the neo-cons’ project in the Middle East. The September 11 attacks heavily contributed to creating a suitable climate for this project in the United States and abroad. Nofaal also argued

²⁹ Gazi Rababaa (prof of political science University of Jordan), Interview, Amman, January 16, 2010.

³⁰ Hasan Abu Nehmaa (a former ambassador and head of the center for dialogue among religions), Interview, Amman, January 19, 2010.

³¹ Amer El Taal (Al Dostoor Newspaper), Interview, Amman, January 16, 2010.

³² Hazem Ayaad (journalist and a daily writer in Assabeel Newspaper), Interview, Amman, January 18, 2010.

³³ Adnaan Hyagnaa, Interview, Amman, January 18, 2010.

³⁴ Hisham Gaseb (prof of political science and the president of Princess Sumaya University for Technology), Interview, Amman, January 19, 2010.

that “even if September 11 had not taken place, the neo-cons would have implemented their project in the region.”³⁵ The American invasion of Iraq led to the increase of animosity to the United States in the Arab public and to a considerable damage of the US image worldwide. Deputy Mohamed Abu Hudeb detailed this argument, emphasizing that “the declared slogan of the neo-cons (if you are not with me, then you are against me), and the declared war against terrorism encompassed a war against Islam and Muslims worldwide.” Regarding the Palestinian issue, there was a clear American bias towards Israel combined with symbolic promises to the Arabs, none of which were implemented. As for Iraq, the United States invaded a central Arab state without legitimate reasons and raised Iran’s clout. As for Iran, the United States succumbed to a double standard by supporting Israeli nuclear power and rejecting the possibility that Iran or any other Middle Eastern state possessed the capability of a nuclear bomb.³⁶

Hussein Megally, head of the Legal Committee in the Jordan parliament, took a more extreme stand, arguing that “no one can distinguish what is American and what is Israeli in the hostility to the Arab nations. There was even no difference between Bush and his predecessors.”³⁷ The journalist Hussein El Raoshedy rounded off the Arabic point of view by arguing that “the United States reduced the war against terrorism to the war against Islam.” The Bush policies were militarily, culturally, and medially offensive, primarily aimed at penetrating and dismantling the Arabic and Islamic states and at altering the Arabic concepts of extremism as well as at imposing democracy and moderation concepts. However, the real crux in the Arab perception of U.S. policies in the Middle East revolved around its stance in the Palestinian dilemma. For eight years, we heard just promises and reiterations about a Palestinian state but the real results were few. El Raoshedy summed up this point, arguing that “the Arab vision vis-à-vis the United States policies in the Middle East can be shortened in a concept of disappointment which bred an Arabic perception that counting on the United States to settle the conflict is useless and mainly a result of an Arab weakness.”³⁸

³⁵ Ahmed Said Nofaal, Interview, Amman, January 20, 2010.

³⁶ Mohamed Abu Hudeb (former head of committee of international relations in the Jordanian Parliament and currently head of the international affairs and security in the Arab Parliament), Interview, Amman, January 20, 2010.

³⁷ Hussein Megally (former head of the Lawyer Syndicate, former member of the Parliament), Interview, Amman, January 23, 2010.

³⁸ Hussein El Raoshedy (journalist and a daily writer with Islamic attitude in Al Dostoor Newspaper), Interview, Amman, January 23, 2010.

In conclusion, there were deep negative Arab perceptions with respect to George W. Bush's eight years in the White House. The Arab mind perceived American foreign policy in this era as undue, depressing, radical, brainless, belligerent, odious, ideological, one-sided, egotistical, indistinguishable from the Israeli policies, and uninformed. Theoretically, the interview partners relied heavily on the neo-realist premises in explaining the Bush administration's policies in the Middle East. In a sense, the explanations of the Arab pundits revolved mainly around the Bush administration's concrete desire for global dominance through controlling the Middle East's petroleum and preventing the emergence of any global or regional power such as China and Iran. In addition, interview partners emphasized that the Bush administration relied mainly on its absolute military power to dismantle the Middle East and to empower Israel's relative military and economic supremacy over the region. According to this Arab perception, Israel was the independent variable in the Bush administration's policies towards Iraq, Iran, and the Palestinian-Israeli conflict. Therefore, the Bush administration's fabricated pretexts and allegations to conquer Iraq and Israeli empowerment were the driving forces behind the Iraq invasion. Likewise, the Bush administration adopted harsh policies against Iran's nuclear ambitions as part of its broader strategy to empower Israel's status in the region. Similarly, the Bush administration flagrantly aligned with Israel's stances in the Palestinian-Israeli conflict.

Also, the interview partners partly dwelled on the liberal perspective in explaining some of the Bush administration's policies in the Middle East. In a sense, the interview partners referred to the alliance between members of the Bush administration and the U.S. military-industrial complex which is also closely aligned to the Israeli lobby in the United States. Also, the role of the neo-cons and the Christian right was noticed by the Arab pundits, albeit in conjunction with its close relations with Israel. A constructivist perspective was marginally used by the interview partners when they referred to the role of ideology and the religious vision of the Bush administration, particularly the figure of the Armageddon war, as an explanatory element in the Bush administration's policies towards the Palestinian-Israeli conflict.

▪ European Policies in the Middle East: An Arabic Perspective

The initial response of an inquiry about the Arab general perception with respect to the European policies in the Middle East from 2000 until 2009 revealed diverse positions. Generally speaking, the European policies in the Middle East were depicted as “subordinated, complementary, dependant on the American position, more balanced in its context despite being ineffective in its results, a minor player that follows the vortex of the American policy, impotent, promoter of American positions, neither a unified nor an independent Common Foreign Policy, more understanding of the facts and the realities of the Middle East than the United States, not different in its context (in the main aims) from the United States and only different with respect to the tools of implementation, obeying the American dictate, individually nationalistic (relying heavily on each member state policies), ‘washing the American dishes,’ politically opportunist and unprincipled, more sensitive to the urgency of the Palestinian issue despite the Israeli reluctance to any independent European role, most of the time directed to change the United States’ policies in the Middle East, limited influence (due to audience), more credible than the United States, eases and directs the American policies differently, a facilitator and not a partner to the United States, immature, secondary role, and a payer of American bills in the Middle East.”³⁹

From the outset, most of the Arab pundits emphasized the subordinated character of the European policies to the American positions, albeit in different ways. Yet, the detailed visions of the 46 interviews in both Egypt and Jordan are essential for the whole picture. For instance, D. Saed El Lawendy argued that after the collapse of the Soviet Union, there were an “Arabic desire and ambition for a bigger and a more efficient European role in the Middle East” even substituting for the Soviet Union. This aspiration made for a certain “blindness” and failure to realize the facts on the ground and explain the European policies from a perspective of wishful thinking instead of the facts. However, this desire and ambition “evaporated” when the European positions were heavily congruent with the American positions. As a matter of fact, European policies did not allow for conflict or to contradiction with the American policies. For instance, in the American war against Iraq France and Germany insisted on having distinct positions ensuing in a transatlantic rift. However, following Bush’s re-election Europe opted for a return to the “American garden” and reentered the role distribution game. In a sense, in matters where the

³⁹ The Author conclusion out of 46 interviews.

United States tended to be reluctant, we find European initiatives, and when the United States leads, Europe returns to the follower position. Hence, there were rather “identical European and American policies that are hard to distinguish,” particularly with the coming of Merkel in Germany and Sarkozy in France.⁴⁰

By the same token, D. Gehad Odaa, professor of political science at Helwan University, distinguished between how Europe understands things and how Europe reacts to U.S. policies. Odaa argued that “Europe understands things in European empiric logic.” In other words, Europe seeks an empire based on the European Union enlargement. Consequently, the European policies in its interaction with the Middle East, such as the Mediterranean Partnership and the New Neighborhood Policy, are policies that seek to work in a conciliatory environment. Accordingly, the E.U. is striving for a benevolent empire based on human rights, partnership, conditionality, and negotiations. However, when Europe reacts to the U.S. policies, its states differ according to whether the strategic elites are distant or close to their American counterparts and their interest. For instance, Britain (Blair), Germany (Merkel), and France (Sarkozy) utterly differed from Britain (Brown), Germany (Schröder) or France (Chirac).⁴¹

In contrast, Tarek Hasan, editor-in chief of Al Ahram- El Messai Newspaper, argued that the main European stance in the Middle East starkly differs from the American stance. Hasan’s view was based on his belief that “the essence of the American policies in the Middle East is the no war no peace policy, whereas the essence of the European policies is peace and rejection of wars based on the European experience in the aftermath of the World War II.”⁴² Likewise, D. Abd El Moneam El Mashaat argued that the collective European policy with respect to the Palestinian-Israeli conflict was “more positive” than the American policy. Europeans enthusiastically sought to reach a settlement of the conflict, recognized Palestinian rights, and supported a Palestinian state, even if they were less effective and restrained by the Israeli reluctance to support any genuine European actions. In Iraq, Europe finally followed the American vortex and preferred a dialogue with Iran.⁴³

Arguably, Ambassador Nabil Fahmey explained the European dilemma in the Middle East pointing out that “the European policies are in a constant contradiction between European

⁴⁰ El Lawendy, Interview, Cairo, July 18, 2009.

⁴¹ Gehad Odaa, Interview, Cairo, July 18, 2009

⁴² Hasan, Interview, Cairo, July 20, 2009.

⁴³ El Mashaat, Interview, Cairo, July 6, 2009.

realism and its historical and geographical ties with the Middle East and its relations with the United States in the context of the NATO alliance.” Fahmey illustrated his vision by arguing that Europe realizes that development and peace in the Middle East are in the European interest because development constrains illegal migration and peace alleviates tensions and secures European energy sources. For those reasons, Europe usually takes a more balanced stance vis-à-vis the peace process despite being practically ineffective. However, with the Bush administration the European stances, that had been trying to keep a balance between its relations with the United States and its interests in the Middle East, turned closer to the American stances. With the Obama administration, the “European pendulum” swung back. To sum up, Fahmey contended that “the European stances are useful but not essential, complementary to the equation but can never change the result.”⁴⁴ Similarly, D. Gamal Abd El Gawad affirmed the positive and constructive role of the European Union in the Middle East in spite of its limited effectiveness which eventually diminished because of its divergence with the American policies.⁴⁵

In his attempt to distinguish between the European and the American policies in the Middle East, Ambassador Saed Shalaby argued that “the European policies profoundly diverged with the American policies in this era.” The main European powers rejected the American war against Iraq and had a diverse approach with respect of promoting democracy in the Middle East. In addition, while the Bush administration ignored the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, Europe considered its resolution a top priority. In Bush’s second term, transatlantic relations converged again after the Bush administration reevaluated its strategy and tactics with its allies in a more conciliatory way. For instance, President Bush paid his first visit to Europe after he was reelected in an endeavor to heal the transatlantic rifts, and he spoke less arrogantly with his European counterparts.⁴⁶

On the other hand, D. Mohamed Selim argued that “the European policies in the Middle East did not differ from the American policies when it comes to the ultimate aims and they only diverged when it comes to the most appropriate tools.” In a sense, the final aims of both Europe and the United States in the Middle East were mostly the same in pursuing Western hegemony over the region and supporting the Israeli project in the region; the main source of divergence between Europe and the United States was “the question of exports”. In other words,

⁴⁴ Fahmey, Interview, Cairo, June 21, 2009.

⁴⁵ Abd El Gawad, Interview, Cairo, August 5, 2009.

⁴⁶ Shalaby, Interview, Cairo, August 11, 2009.

the main transatlantic divergence in the Middle East revolved only around the tools of action. While the United States relied on hard power, Europe used soft diplomacy to facilitate the American project. For instance, Dominick De Fleabane's speech at the Security Council on the eve of the American invasion to Iraq was "nothing but coverage of the American project." In a game of role distribution, the United States took the lead in Iraq and in Palestine, whereas Europe took the lead in the Iranian nuclear crisis.⁴⁷

From a different angle, D. Mustafa Elwey affirmed the European dependence on the United States, arguing that "Europe may take diverse stances from the United States based on different calculations such as Germany and France did in the Iraqi crisis. Nevertheless, at the end of the day and on the strategic level, European differences with the United States broke on the rock of the European strategic need of the United States". Europe lost its status as a superpower after World War II. Therefore, Europe was no longer able to follow a dependable policy and had to accept to play the follower role to the United States. Britain recognized this and considered that in order to have a place in the world's leadership it has to follow the United States. The other European continental powers (such as Germany and France) found the European subordinated nature to the United States easier said than done. For that reason, some discrepancies emerged on the surface (such as the French German refusal to the American invasion to Iraq). Nevertheless, these "discrepancies could never change the course of action or even break the American wave." The most that Europeans could do was to "abstain from" participation such as the Iraq crisis and even such abstention did not last for long and a "complete European acquiescence to the United States turned out to be the guiding principle."⁴⁸

While D. Manar El Shurbagy distinguished between "Old" Europe (refusal of the American military expansion) and "New" Europe (followers of the American vortex),⁴⁹ D. Mohamed Abd Ella argued that "although Europe precisely figures out the realities of the Middle East on the ground, Israel has always been reluctant to any independent European role in the peace process and only endorses a European subordinated role to the Middle East."⁵⁰ In addition, D. Hasan Nafaa, professor of political science at Cairo University, attributed the negative role of

⁴⁷ Sillem, Interview, Cairo, August 16, 2009.

⁴⁸ Elwey, Interview, Cairo, August 20, 2009.

⁴⁹ El Shurbagy, Interview, Cairo, August 16, 2009.

⁵⁰ Abd Ella, Interview, Cairo, August 16, 2009.

Europe in the Middle East to the lack of a unified European foreign policy.⁵¹ Likewise, D. Osama El Gazaly Harb stressed the European impotence to find a unified foreign policy arguing that “as much as the Europeans succeeded in their common economy, they failed in securing a unified common policy. We are faced by diverse European policies rather than a single policy.” Harb contended also that European policies are “pragmatic, opportunist, and unprincipled.” For instance, both France and Italy disregarded all the European values and were being tamed by the Libyan money although they knew that Mohamer El Qazafy was a dictator.⁵²

Getting into details, Atef El Gamry portrayed the ineffectiveness and the negative nature of the European Union in the Middle East, arguing that Europe has accepted that the United States takes the main role in the peace process, particularly Bush’s attempts to terminate the Palestinian issue according to the Israeli interests. In Iraq, some European states joined the United States while others did not, and in Iran, Europe had a diverse approach. With respect to the Palestinian issue, although Europe supported the Palestinian right to an independent state and denounced the Israeli settlement activities as illegal, its positions did turn into a unified policy. The European ineffectiveness was not only attributed to the American and the Israeli reluctance to give Europe any tangible role, but also to the “negative Arabic position.” In a sense, although Europe had increasing common interests with the Arabs, business opportunities in the Arab countries (petroleum, weapons, trade, investments, and enterprises) Arabs could not coax it into a more balanced and fair position.⁵³

Along with the idea of European ineffectiveness in the Middle East, D. Mustafa El Feqy argued that “Europeans are happy with the negative role that they play in the Middle East.” Europeans are only “audience,” mainly concerned with their economic interests, give a blind eye to the political prospects of the Palestinian issue, and like to be the biggest donor to the Palestinian authority. Therefore, counting on the Europeans has always proved it fallacy to Arabs. The Europeans themselves argue that the keys for the solution of the Palestinian-Israeli conflict are at the hands of the United States. Although Europeans show a humanitarian sympathy with the Palestinian suffering sometimes, they do not apply pressure on Israel and hardly even blame it for brutal actions like the Gaza war in 2009.⁵⁴ Likewise, D. Mohamed

⁵¹ Hasan Nafaa, Interview, Cairo, August 30, 2009.

⁵² El Gazaly Harb, Interview, Cairo, September 1, 2009.

⁵³ El Gamry, Interview, Cairo, September 5, 2009.

⁵⁴ El Feqy, Interview, Cairo, September 27, 2009.

Kamal argued that “Europe is to a great extent a subordinate to the American leadership in the Middle East.” Although Europe better understands the situations on the ground, it cannot act without coordinating with and acquiescing to the Americans aims.⁵⁵

Moreover, D. Sami Al kazendar explained the negative role of the European Union with the fact that “the European states do not desire to create a gap with the United States, owing not only to the Israeli lobbies but also to the Arab impotency to use its cards with Europe.”⁵⁶ Furthermore, D. Waleed Abu Dalboh explained the European ineffectiveness by arguing that “the European role in the Middle East is more a negotiations facilitator than being a main partner.” Europe becomes a main player only when it gets along with the United States’ policies and usually its role is confined to financial aids, construction programs, and negotiations.⁵⁷ D. Adnaan Hayagna eloquently affirmed the subordinated nature of the European Union to the United States in the Middle East by pointing out that “the European foreign policy is the American foreign policy after one hour and it is nothing but a dish washing policy.” For instance, in Palestine Europe had a policy of paying bills, and in Iraq it had a symbolic participation, and in Iran Europe tried hard to convince the United States of the vitality of dialogue and negotiations.⁵⁸

D. Mustafa Hamarna went further and argued that “the European policies in the Middle East amounted to almost nothing.” Europe’s (France’s and Germany’s) attempts to prevent the war against Iraq failed, and later on Europe interfered in Iraq to politically rescue the United States from its predicament. With respect to the Palestinian issue, Europeans are capable of doing nothing on the ground with the American and the Israeli lack of enthusiasm.⁵⁹ D. Mohamed El Masry further attributed the European dependency on the United States to the significance of the American component in making of the European foreign policy. El Masry argued that “Israel’s security is an American domestic issue and the United States is in a deep-rooted alliance with Europe since the Word War II.” Therefore, there can be no significant European role in the Middle East without initial American approval. To signify that, the Vince

⁵⁵ Kamal, Interview, Cairo, October 10, 2009.

⁵⁶ Al Kazendar, Interview, Cairo, January 17, 2009.

⁵⁷ Abu Dalboh, Interview, Amman, January 14, 2010.

⁵⁸ Hayagna, Interview, Amman, January 18, 2010.

⁵⁹ Mustafa Hamarna (editor-in-chief of El Sabeel Magazine), Interview, Amman, January 23, 2010.

declaration is a very advanced European position of the Palestinian-Israeli conflict but the “American component” played a crucial role in not turning this position into effective action.⁶⁰

In non-accordance with the main stream, Abd El Azeem Hamad stressed the “positive” role of the European Union in the Middle East, arguing that Europeans were more “sensitive” to the significance of solving the Palestinian issue as a “first priority” and they were also more careful that the Iranian nuclear crisis was solved by force. In other words, the entire European endeavor in the Middle East was mainly directed to change the American policies in the Middle East. For instance, the Road Map plan was originally outlined by Joschka Fischer (the former German foreign minister) and was adopted later by the Bush administration and the Quartet.⁶¹ Likewise, Ambassador Mohamed Basyony emphasized the positive role of the European Union, arguing that Europe is more “credible” than the United States in the Middle East and has made many positive gestures. But at the end of the day, Europe had to “adjust” its policies in order not to contradict the United States’ policies.⁶² Furthermore, Ambassador Mohamed El Oraby praised the European policies, arguing that European policies in the Middle East were more “realistic” and closer to the region than those of the United States, based on “Europe’s geographical proximity and historical ties with the Middle East.”⁶³

The bottom- line is that Arab perceptions of the European policies in the Middle East diverge between mostly negative and sometimes positive. Nevertheless, the Arab pundits unanimously asserted the ineffectiveness of the European policies and their dependent nature. Whenever European frictions with the United States policies emerge on the surface, they soon fade away and a new page of cooperation is opened between the United States (as a leader) and Europe (as a follower), albeit with different tools of action. Theoretically, the interview partners used mainly neo-realist assumptions to explain the negative and subordinated role of the European Union in the Middle East. Consistent with the dissertation’s neo-realistic findings, the Arab pundits claimed that the EU member states adopted mainly bandwagoning strategies towards the United States in the Middle East, particularly in respect to the Palestinian-Israeli conflict. They explained the European role with its strategic need to have a say in the Middle

⁶⁰ Mohamed El Masry (head of the opinion unit at the center for strategic and political studies-the University of Jordan), Interview, Amman, January 23, 2010.

⁶¹ Hamad, Interview, Cairo, September 2, 2009.

⁶² Mohamed Basyony (head of the committee of foreign affairs at the Shoura Council and a former ambassador in Israel), Interview, Cairo, September 29, 2009.

⁶³ El Oraby, Interview, Cairo, December 15, 2009.

East. In other words, although the Arab pundits noticed that Europe was more familiar with the realities in the Middle East than the United States, they claimed that it lacked a common foreign and security policy and neither Israel nor the United States would accept any genuine European role in the region unless it was consistent with and supplement to American and Israeli interests. However, the interview partners added another reason for Europe's ineffectiveness in the Middle East: the lack of any genuine Arab pressure on European countries to take a more solid stance, particularly towards the Palestinian-Israeli conflict.

Nevertheless, some interview partners saw a partially positive role of the European Union in the Middle East based on liberal premises. In a sense, they differentiated between American and European aims towards the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. While the Bush administration marginalized the peace process in favor of its global war against terrorism, Europe has long desired a concrete solution to the conflict. However, those who claimed a positive role for the European Union in the Middle East did neither refute its ineffectiveness nor its subordinated nature to the United States under the auspices of the transatlantic alliance. In fact, this attitude is consistent with the dissertation's findings that Europe sometimes diverges with the United States in the Middle East due to different perceptions and priorities; however both Europe and the United States usually reach a consensus at the end of the day over their disputed perspectives.

Inconsistent with the dissertation's findings some Arab pundits claimed that the European policies in the Middle East were identical to those of the United States and that both Europe and the United States played a game of role distribution in the Iraq war. In a sense, the French refusal to the American war in Iraq was merely covering the American stance. The dissertation claims that there is a clear divergence over the Iraq war between core Europe and the United States. Later on, convergence became the landmark of the transatlantic policies in Iraq.

▪ **Convergence or Divergence in Transatlantic Policies: Statistical and Political Analysis**

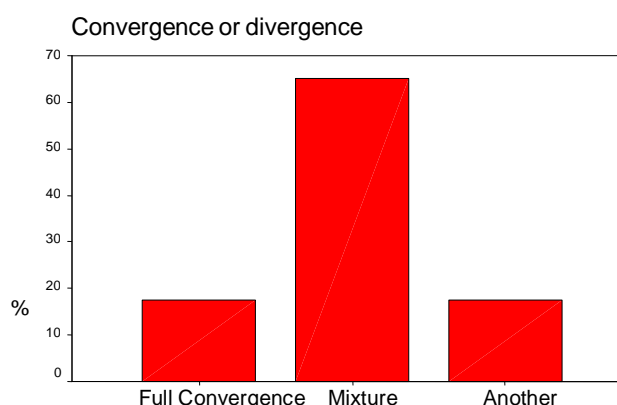
In the interviews conducted the answers to a question regarding the overall relations between the American and the European policies in the Middle East in 2003 until 2009 were at variance. They ranged from “full convergence,” “a mixture between convergence and divergence,” to “another answer” with a complete refusal to “full divergence.” The percentage of those who argued it was “full convergence” was 17.4%, while those who argued it was a “mixture” reached 65.2%, and those who chose “another answer” were 17.4 %. These percentages are illustrated in the table and diagram below.

Convergence or Divergence

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Full Convergence	8	17.4	17.4	17.4
Mixture	30	65.2	65.2	82.6
Another	8	17.4	17.4	100.0
Total	46	100.0	100.0	

The percentage of those who argued the policies were in “full convergence,” 17.4%, differed in explaining the prospects and reasons of this convergence. For instance, D. Saed El Lawendy argued that “the American and the European policies in the Middle East are in full convergence, albeit with some divergences that might materialize on the

surface.” El Lawendy also pinpointed to the most central prospects of the transatlantic convergence: the Israeli war against Gaza in 2009, which was a manifestation of American-European coordination. There was full and unconditional American support to the Israeli war and a parallel European support to Israel, albeit less pronounced. In the context of the war, Germany, France, Britain, Spain, and Italy declared that Israel has the right to defend itself although they accurately recognize that “the rock is not a tantamount to a tank.” The second prospect that El Lawendy referred to was that Europe, when discussing the security and stability south of the Mediterranean, including the Palestinian issue, has always opted for not making a linkage between the Barcelona process and the security in the Mediterranean in order to escape from taking any solid position in the conflict. Moreover, when the Barcelona process failed, owing to



the Israeli brazenness, instead of pressurizing Israel, Europe decided to leave and went to the Arab Maghreb injecting new blood into a “partial Euro-Mediterranean project called (5+5)”. El Lawendy further explained the full transatlantic convergence by arguing that “politics is nothing but interests and both Europe and the United States have common powerful and deep-rooted interests in the Middle East.”⁶⁴

Along with this vision, ambassador Gamal Bayomy asserted the full transatlantic convergence in the Middle East when it comes to broad interests, particularly establishing an Israeli entity within the region. However, Europe and the United States differ when it comes to the details over the most appropriate tools to handle the issues in the Middle East. The Iraq war initially rebuffed by France and Germany was a clear-cut example. One of the main manifestations of the full transatlantic convergence was that after the Iraq war Europe regretted clashing with the United States and went back to the American garden. Likewise, Rumsfeld “flattered” Europe at the European Security conference in 2005 and also Europe did likewise because it wanted to have a part of the economic Iraqi cake following the war.⁶⁵

From a different angle, D. Osama El Gazaly Harb attributed the full transatlantic convergence in the Middle East to “the Islamic danger as a unifying factor to the West.” Harb eloquently argued that the driving force behind the American and the European perspectives of the region was decisively determined by their conflict with what they call “the Islamic terrorism.” Therefore, both Europe and the United States coordinated their efforts and were deeply converged to contain and confront the Islamic danger. In other words, Europe and the United States converged in the past to confront the Communist danger and now it was time to face the Islamic threat. Although Europe and the United States diverged over the Iraq war, this was partial and a divergence in details rather than a radical and crucial rift. At the end of the day, “Europeans and Americans overtly or covertly fully coordinated with each other in addressing the Muslim world.”⁶⁶

The full transatlantic convergence in the Middle East was explained by Sood Qubilat as being “over the main outlines with some differences over the details.” Qubilat attributed this to the fact that in the past decades the European governments delegated the United States the sole right to address the Arab region freely; Europe only secured the financial, spiritual, and political

⁶⁴ El Lawendy, Interview, Cairo, July 18, 2009.

⁶⁵ Bayomy, Interview, Cairo, August 4, 2009.

⁶⁶ El Gazaly Harb, Interview, Cairo, September 1, 2009.

support to the United States to different degrees. For instance, the European popular rejection of the American invasion of Iraq aside, most of the European governments except France and Germany aligned with the United States. Transatlantic differences quickly faded away when Merkel and Sarkozy took office. Another example was the fact that Europe participated, albeit symbolically, in both the Iraq and Afghanistan campaigns and largely supported the American policies vis-à-vis Israel.⁶⁷ By the same token, Amer El Taal explained the full transatlantic convergence by “the European subordinated nature to the United States even after Bush left office.” For instance, there were identical views with respect to the tools and the context of the solution of the Palestinian issue. Here it suffices to point out that Europe, indistinguishably from the American position, did not deal with Hamas although it was popularly, legally, and fairly elected. At the same time, Europe dealt with Mahmud Abbas in a positive way and supported him financially.⁶⁸

In conjunction with this vision, D. Adnaan Hyagnaa attributed the full transatlantic convergence to the fact that “both Europe and the United States have the same aims and interests in the Middle East and the only difference resides in methodology.” In a sense, the United States tends to use the hard power and the heavy stick while Europe tends to use international legitimacy and soft power to cover American policies. For instance, France and Germany refused the American war against Iraq not because they cared about Iraq’s regional integrity but because they feared the American hegemony over the region and wanted to give the war international legitimacy first. In other words, both Europe and the United States converged over the goal of ousting the Iraqi regime, but differed over the methodology. Likewise, both Europe and the United States agreed on the two-state solution, reinforcing Abbas, and isolating Hamas; the sole difference was merely in the tools. Furthermore, both Europe and the United States highly converged over eliminating an Iranian nuclear state but differed over the most suitable methods.⁶⁹

Finally, Hussein Megally eloquently refused to make a distinction between what is European and what is American in the Middle East. Megally maintained that there was “an American-European-Israeli plan to divide the Arab nation into pieces.” According to him, the

⁶⁷ Qubilat, Interview, Amman, January 17, 2010.

⁶⁸ El Taal, Interview, Amman, January 16, 2010.

⁶⁹ Hyagnaa, Interview, Amman, January 18, 2010.

United States led a war against the Arab nation in Iraq, Palestine, Lebanon, Sudan, and Somalia with the support of Europe and Israel.⁷⁰

The large percentage (65.2%) of interview partners who viewed the American-European policies in the Middle East as a mixture between convergence and divergence also differed in their explanations and even in their opinion of the prospects of such a mixture. D. Gehad Odaa argued that there was a “deep strategic convergence” between Europe and the United States in the Middle East. However, in some cases transatlantic divergences emerged over the “operational level and then soon fade away.” For instance, France and Germany refused to participate in the Iraq war from the outset, but after Merkel and Sarkozy came to power they sincerely tried to heal the transatlantic rift.⁷¹ In contrast, Tarek Hasan attributed the transatlantic mixture of convergence and divergence to the fact that US policies in the Middle East were mainly based on the idea of “no war no peace,” whereas European policies were based on “the peace logic,” on avoiding a severe and a direct conflict with the United States and on searching for ways to manage the conflicts instead.⁷² Ambassador Nabil Fahmey explained his vision of this mixture by arguing that the Bush administration’s policy was “redirected” after the September 11 attacks to the extreme political right. Consequently, the fight against terrorism and for regime change in the Middle East without consultation of its European allies estranged the transatlantic partners. However, in Bush’s second term, the United States went back to conciliate and converge with Europe, and Europe especially Germany and France, reconciled with the United States.⁷³

From a different perspective, Ambassador Abd El Raof El Ready viewed the relationship between Europe and the United States in the Middle East as “a mixture that tends more towards convergence at the end of the day.” This was because Europe was not a unified entity in which some member states preferred to align with the United States and others did not. For instance, although France and Germany repudiated the American invasion to Iraq, Europe eventually harmonized with the United States.⁷⁴

Likewise, D. Mohamed Selim argued this relationship was “a mixture but convergence surpassed divergence.” Selim explained his vision by arguing that there was a “transatlantic

⁷⁰ Megally, Interview, Amman, January 23, 2010.

⁷¹ Odaa, Interview, Amman, July 18, 2009.

⁷² Tarek Hasan (editor-in-chief of El Ahram El Messai daily newspaper), Interview, Cairo, July 20, 2009.

⁷³ Fahmey, Interview, Cairo, July 21, 2009.

⁷⁴ El Ready, Interview, Cairo, August 5, 2009.

convergence in political strategic issues (hegemony over the Middle East), cultural issues (spreading western values), and economic issues (free trade).” However, the sole transatlantic divergence in the Middle East was mainly over who controls and penetrates the “markets.” With respect to Iran, there was a transatlantic convergence that Iran should not become a nuclear state. With respect to Iraq, there was a European understanding of the American invasion without formally announcing it. The proof was the fact that France declared on the first day of the war that although it rejected the war, it would not stand with a non-democratic state against a democratic state. According to Selim, the prospects of transatlantic convergence in economics are turning the region entirely into a “capitalist system,” and the sole difference is over who has more goods and who sells more. The prospects of transatlantic convergence in politics are depending on empowering the Israeli project, the misbalance of powers in favor of Israel, and on eradicating any opposition to the western project in the Middle East.⁷⁵

Along with this vision, D. Bader El Maady, professor of political science at the University of Jordan, also viewed the transatlantic relationship as “a mixture that has a propensity towards convergence.” El Maady underscored his view by arguing that, generally speaking, Europe and the United States diverge over Middle East issues (Iraq, Iran, peace process). However, whenever Europe needed to take an actual decision, it did not dare to make a decision that contradicted with US policies. For instance, the recent European decision to recognize Eastern Jerusalem as a capital for a Palestinian state was being aborted because of the American refusal. In Iran, Europeans have tried to interfere but the final decision was at the hands of the United States, as if Europe was a mediator and not a genuine partner in the crisis.⁷⁶

Furthermore, D. Gamal Abd El Gawad explained the mixture by pointing out that both Europe and the United States are convergent on broader interests in the Middle East, but that they diverge over the best approach. For example, in the Israeli-Palestinian conflict Europe always was in favor of accelerating the peace process whereas the Bush administration was reluctant. Therefore, Europe tried to restore American interests in the conflict; the Quartet was a materialization of this European endeavor.⁷⁷ Similarly, Ambassador Saed Shalaby explained this mixture by observing that there was a European willingness to coordinate with the United States, particularly as regarding to the peace process. Transatlantic divergence materialized only when

⁷⁵ Selim, Interview, Cairo, August 16, 2009.

⁷⁶ Bader El Maady, Interview, Amman, January 13, 2010.

⁷⁷ Abd El Gawad, Interview, Cairo, August 5, 2009.

the American behavior obstructed peace and security in the region. For instance, when the Quartet was initiated, the European goal was to broaden the international endeavor in the peace process. However, the Quartet's meetings proved that the United States used it as an "umbrella for its policies." Therefore, some of the Quartet's members publicly complained that the United States unilaterally issued the Quartet's declarations.⁷⁸

Both D. Mohamed Abd Ella and D. Ali El Dean Helal agreed on the prospects of the transatlantic mixture in the Middle East and cited Iraq and Palestine as examples. In Iraq, France and Germany initially rejected the invasion but later *de facto* accepted it. In Palestine, Europe was initially to some extent enthusiastic towards a number of UN decisions that condemned Israeli atrocities, yet after an American UN veto Europe aligned with the United States. Abd Ella and Helal explained this with a convergence over the main transatlantic objectives in the Middle East; the divergences that came to the fore were due to the split into an "old" and a "new" Europe. "Old Europe" was considered as wiser due to its historical and cultural legacy; therefore it had a more realistic estimate of the situations which sometimes contradicts with that of the United States. "New Europe," on the other hand, still perceived the United States as their savior from the Soviet threat.⁷⁹

In a contrasting view, D. Hasan Nafaa attributed the transatlantic mixture of convergence and divergence in the Middle East to the fact that the United States was a "single" nation that conducted a unified foreign policy whereas the European Union had numerous centers for decision-making, like a "dragon that has many heads," and diverse national interests.⁸⁰

In yet another interpretation, D. Mustafa Elwy eloquently explained the mixture by the pattern of the US leadership and the EU subordinated character with respect to the Middle East. Elwy argued that if Europe was to be left alone and did not follow American policies any longer, it would not have been a part of the equation of American policies in the Middle East. Due to its interests and its better understanding of the Middle East, Europe was supposed not to follow the US policies any longer. However, what always gets Europe back on track is the fact that "the power equation has been settled since 1949, in a clear-cut pattern of the United States as the leader and Europe as the follower." It is a pattern in which Europe in the beginning seems reluctant to follow the United States and then later retreats. The initial European reluctance to

⁷⁸ Shalaby, Interview, Cairo, August 11, 2009.

⁷⁹ Helal, Interview, Cairo, March 1, 2009 and Abd Ella, Cairo, Interview, August 16, 2009.

⁸⁰ Nafaa, Cairo, Interview, August 30, 2009.

any American policy in the Middle East is a genuine expression of the actual European interests. However, the retreat from the initial positions occurs because Europeans realize that their interests are essentially associated with the American interest.⁸¹ Likewise, D. Mustafa El Feqy explained this mixture by arguing that “at the end of the day the aims of the Eastern Atlantic and the western Atlantic are identical.” In a sense, Europe usually follows the United States after a short period of reluctance. In other words, “Europe is the always postponed yes to the United States.” For instance, Prime Minister Chirac represented the initial reluctance which faded away when Sarkozy preceded the United States in supporting Israel and in condemning the Iranian nuclear activities.⁸²

Conversely, Abd El Azeem Hamad explained the transatlantic mixture by arguing that “Europe is the vanguard of change in the Middle East.” Although Europe and the United States have a common vision to resolve the Palestinian-Israeli conflict, the change always begins with the European position and then the United States follows after a considerable period of time. For instance, at the Valencia conference in 1980, Europe recognized the Palestinian right of self-determination, the dialogue with the PLO, and the two-state solution and preceded the United States for years. Later on, the American position became isolated and then changed. For instance, in the Bush senior administration, the United States recognized the Palestinian right of self-determination, dialogue with the PLO, and the two-state solution. The rationale behind this mixture was that Europe is more “experienced” in the Middle East, geographically “closer” to the region, and more affected by its instability. Besides, the “Israeli lobbies in Europe are less powerful than those in the United States.”⁸³

Along with the Arab main stream, both D. Mohamed Kamal and D. Zaid Eyadaat argued that there was a transatlantic convergence over the broader strategic orientations due to the close political and economic relations in the NATO alliance. However, divergence also comes in details with respect to the Middle East issues. The reasons behind this mixture vary; among them are “geographical proximity” (any instability in the Middle East affects Europe more than the United States), “demographic factors” (there are more Islamic and Arabic immigrants in Europe than the United States), and “economic factors” (Europe is more dependent on Arab oil than the United States and has crucial trading interests in the Middle East). These factors facilitate the

⁸¹ Elwy, Interview, Cairo, August 20, 2009.

⁸² El Feqy, Interview, Cairo, September 27, 2009.

⁸³ Hamad, Interview, Cairo, September 2, 2009.

European understanding of the Arab interest compared to that of the United States. A weaker Israeli lobby makes Europe more objective because it is less subjected to the domestic pressures American decision-makers face. The remaining explanations in this group were a variation of the explanations in the preceding paragraphs.⁸⁴

The 17.4 % of the interview partners who chose the category “another answer” when asked about the relationship between the European and the US policies in the Middle East meant full European subordination to the United States’ policies in the Middle East. Nabil Zaky contended that he observed “a clear-cut European subordination to the United States.”⁸⁵ D. Manar El Shurbagy argued that there was “no unified European policy in the Middle East in order to put it on an equal footing with the United States.”⁸⁶ Likewise, D. Mahmud Abazza refused to talk about a single European stance in the Middle East but instead contended it was more appropriate to talk about various national European positions.⁸⁷ Equally, Ambassador Mohamed El Oraby depicted the relationship between Europe and the United States in the Middle East as “the relationship between the car driver (the United States) and the back seat rider who pays the price of the oil (Europe).” El Oraby even gave a hypothetical example: If Europe wanted to hold a conference to restore the momentum of the peace process in the Middle East; it can never do so without the absolute consent of the United States.⁸⁸

D. Abd Alla El Noqrashy further contended that the European policies in the Middle East are a “complementary to the American policies.” In other words, the European policies are nothing but a cosmetic faces to the American policies in the Middle East.⁸⁹ Similarly, D. Hisham Gaseb argued that European policies are “subordinated” to US policies in the Middle East. Sometimes some European voices spoke with a different language than the United States, for example criticizing Israel in the European parliaments and syndicates and displaying no enthusiasm towards Israeli atrocities. However, until now these positions did not form an independent European stance to be reckoned with. In Iraq and Afghanistan, Europe followed the American vortex, and in Palestine Europe was utterly subordinated to the American policies,

⁸⁴ Kamal, Interview, Cairo, September 27, 2009 and Eyadaat, Interview, Amman, January 14, 2010.

⁸⁵ Zaky, Interview, Cairo, August 4, 2009.

⁸⁶ El Shobagy, Interview, Cairo, August 16, 2009.

⁸⁷ Abazza, Interview, Cairo, August 16, 2009.

⁸⁸ El Oraby, Interview, Cairo, December 15, 2009.

⁸⁹ El Noqrashy, Interview, Amman, January 14, 2010.

compared to Turkey.⁹⁰ Mustafa Hamarnaa perceived the relationship as “alliance and differences only take place between allies and soon they fade away.”⁹¹

To make a long story short, although there were various Arab perceptions with respect to the relationship between Europe and the United States, the most dominant Arab view was that Europe and the United States mostly converge, albeit with the kind of secondary or marginal frictions that normally take place between allies. However, in the final analysis, the European policies in the Middle East are nothing but subordinated to the United States. Even if transatlantic distinctions emerge sometimes on the surface, they are essentially over the tools and the methods and not over the long-term strategic western interests in the Middle East. There is some consistency of the Arab perception with the dissertation’s argument that transatlantic differences over the Middle East issues are mainly over details and not over the essence of transatlantic policies. Within the three categories (full convergence 17%, mixture 65%, and subordinated Europe 17%), the interview partners’ explanations revealed that they were more inclined to portray the transatlantic relationship in the Middle East as more convergent than divergent. In a sense, the supporters of the full convergence theory, anchored in the realist premises, explained the identical transatlantic interests in the Middle East by mutual desires to secure Israel’s security and supremacy, to fight against the Islamic danger, and to isolate Hamas as a model for Islam in the region. Some explanations even went further and assumed a triple conspiracy among the Bush administration, Europe, and Israel to divide the Arab nation.

Likewise, the explanations of the supporters of the mixture theory were very close to those that supported full convergence. Although there was more Arab inclination to claim superficial divergences between Europe and the United States, most members of this category argued that convergence was the landmark of the transatlantic policies at the end of the day. Explanations for the transatlantic mixture were anchored mainly in the Bush administration’s unilateralist and non-consultant policies, the settlement of the power equation in favor of the United States since World War II, and the non-existent European common foreign policy. Europe’s special relationship with the Middle East, attributed to its geographical proximity, might have led to some divergences with the United States; its demographic and economic interests are indeed more urgent than those of the United States. The same explanations hold true

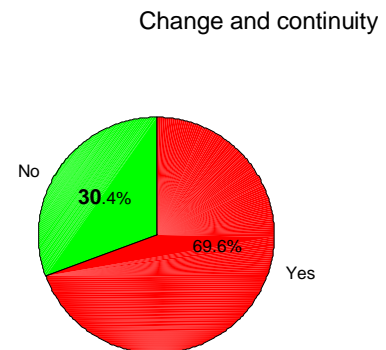
⁹⁰ Gaseb, Interview, Amman, January 19, 2010.

⁹¹ Hamarna, Interview, Amman, January 23, 2010.

for the third category (subordination) where European policies are depicted as nothing more than cosmetic compared to those of the United States.

▪ **Bush's First and Second Term in The Middle East: Continuity and Change**

When pundits were asked if there was a change in behavior between Bush's first and his second term regarding Europe in the Middle East, only 30.4% saw no change and 69.6 % argued that there was a change. The smaller group that saw no change between Bush's first and second terms gave diverse explanations for this view. D. Refaat El Saaed argued that the Bush administration was intrinsically ideological and that it continued its arrogance towards and pressures on its European allies to stick to its foreign policy plans in both terms.⁹² Likewise, D. Mustafa Elwey observed no difference between Bush's first and second term. In a sense, in Bush first term, the creation of the "Old Europe"- "New Europe" dichotomy was an American political maneuver to subordinate the opposing European states to the American war in Iraq. In Bush's second term, the American administration began to realize the negative consequences of its policies in the Middle East and a self-correction supposedly took place. Nevertheless, the Bush administration pursued its arrogance, stubbornness and ideological orientation. Although many of politicians that embodied the neo-con stance left during the second term, the head of the snake remained, according to Elwey. He emphasized that "Cheney was the genuine president of the United States and not Bush."⁹³



D. Sami El Kazendar saw the only difference between Bush's two terms in the September 11 attacks which gave the Bush a strong "pretext" to invade Afghanistan and Iraq.⁹⁴ In addition, Sood Qubilaat argued that the extreme American policies continued in Bush's two terms whether towards Europe or towards the Arab-Islamic world.⁹⁵ Similarly, D. Adnaan Hyagnaa argued that Bush's policies remained "arrogant." To prove his view, Hyagnaa cited the example of the warm welcome Europeans gave to Barack Obama's speech in Germany in the summer of 2008. To

⁹² El Saaed, Interview, Cairo, August 4, 2009.

⁹³ Elwey, Interview, Cairo, August 20, 2009.

⁹⁴ El Kazendar, Interview, Amman, January 17, 2010.

⁹⁵ Qubilaat, Interview, Amman, January 17, 2010.

him, this was a decisive indicator that Europeans were “fed up with Bush’s policies.”⁹⁶ In a more extreme view, Hussein Megally argued that the United States’ policies do not differ under the leadership of Bush or anybody else.⁹⁷ D. Mustafa Hamrana argued that there were no differences in the Bush’s policies on the ground. There were only more balanced declarations in the Bush’s second term with no change in the real policies.⁹⁸ Likewise, Ambassador Hasan Abu Nehmaa argued that the Bush’s policies were the same from the first day at office until his last day. However, in the second term when failure materialized in Iraq and Afghanistan the Bush administration tried only to fix its problems without changing its genuine policy of the continuity of war until victory is accomplished.⁹⁹

As for the almost 70 % that perceived a change between Bush’s first and second term, most of their explanations were based on the impression that the changes in the second term were not in ideas or concepts but rather due to the pressure of the American predicaments in Iraq and Afghanistan. D. Saed El Lawendy attributed the main transatlantic rift in Bush’s first term to the fact that the United States treated Europe arrogantly and did not consult with European leaders. However, in the second term, faced with the failures in Iraq and Afghanistan, the United States recalculated its policies and began to reconcile with Europe. Therefore, Condoleezza Rice paid her first visit to Europe to heal the transatlantic rifts over Iraq at the beginning of Bush’s second term. Joschka Fischer summarized the European predicament in relations with the United States arguing that “our real crisis with the United States is the fact that the United States addresses us as subordinates and we need to be partners.”¹⁰⁰ D. Gehad Odaa, on the other hand, attributed the main difference between Bush’s first and second term to the personality of Condoleezza Rice as a US Secretary of State. In a sense, Rice managed to convince Bush of the necessity of cooperating with Europe to lessen the American losses in Iraq and in Afghanistan and also of the necessity of alleviating the European resentment over the American contemptuous position towards the European states.¹⁰¹

D. Abd El Moneem El Mashaat explained Bush’s change in the second term along these lines - as an American attempt to adapt to its failure in Iraq rather than as a change in

⁹⁶ Hyagnaa, Interview, Amman, January 18, 2010.

⁹⁷ Megally, Interview, Amman, January 23, 2010.

⁹⁸ Hamrana, Interview, Amman, January 23, 2010.

⁹⁹ Abu Nehmaa, Interview, Amman, January 19, 2010.

¹⁰⁰ El Lawendy, Interview, Cairo, July 18, 2009.

¹⁰¹ Odaa, Interview, Cairo, July 18, 2009.

concepts.¹⁰² Likewise, Ambassador Nabil Fahmey argued that the difference in the second term was merely in practices and not in the genuine situation. In a sense, the first Bush administration was “ideological to the core – if you are not with me, you are against me.” In Bush’s second administration, the United States reconciliated with Europe in order to share some of its burdens in Iraq and Afghanistan but it did not fundamentally change its policies.¹⁰³ Equally, Nabil Zaky, Ambassador Abd El Raof El Ready, Ambassador Saed Shaliby, D. Gamal Abd El Gawad, and D. Mohamed Selim attributed the main reason for the policy differences in Bush’s second term to the American predicament in Iraq.¹⁰⁴

D. Manar El Shorbagy pointed out that Condoleezza Rice led an attempt to get “diplomacy back” into the US foreign policy toolbox and at the same time to reduce the militarization of American foreign policy from Bush’s first term. However, this attempt did not succeed in due to Cheney’s pressures. Therefore, the same policies proceeded in the second term, albeit in a “galvanized diplomatic style” compared to the first term. In addition to the Iraq predicament, the catastrophic results of Bush’s first term policies heavily materialized in 2006. The Hurricane Katarina was the straw that broke the administration back, occurring at the same time as the Israeli military failure in Lebanon in 2006.¹⁰⁵

D. Mohamed Abd Ella argued that the Bush administration’s policies remained the same for seven years and only changed in its eighth and last year. For instance, the Bush administration faced – in its last year of office – an increasing defiance from Iran and was consequently in a pressing need for its European allies. Also, after the Baker-Hamilton report the Bush administration called for the Annapolis conference and started to perceive for the first time the urgency of settling the Arab-Israeli conflict. The reasons behind this change were largely due to the increase of the American quandary in Iraq as well as the deteriorating image of the Bush administration within the United States, in the Middle East, and worldwide. Therefore, “a new approach towards the Middle East started to emerge in Bush’s last year.” His successor clearly adapted this approach when he mentioned for the first time that solving the Israeli-Palestinian conflict was not only in the Palestinian but also in the American national interest.¹⁰⁶

¹⁰² El Mashaat, Interview, Cairo, July 6, 2009.

¹⁰³ Fahmiy, Interview, Cairo, July 21, 2009.

¹⁰⁴ Zaky, El Ready, Shaliby, Abd El Gawad, Silem interviews.

¹⁰⁵ El Shorbagy, Interview, Cairo, August 16, 2009.

¹⁰⁶ Abd Ela, Interview, Cairo, August 16, 2009.

D. Hasan Nafaa attributed the difference between Bush's first and second term to the emergence of the limits of American military power. In Bush's first term, the neo-cons' project to dominate the globe was severe, particularly in the aftermath of the September 11 attacks. The neo-cons had prepared project arguing that the Clinton administration wasted a historical opportunity – after the collapse of the Soviet Union - to empower the United States to dominate the world as well as to remap the Middle East according to American and Israeli interests. However, this project faltered in Bush's second term as a result of the American involvement in the Iraqi quandary and the fact that most of the neo-cons left the Bush's second administration.¹⁰⁷

Likewise, Abd El Azeem Hamad attributed the difference between the first and second term to the European and the Arab pressures, the American failure in Iraq, and the American administration's need for European and Arab cooperation in Iraq and Afghanistan.¹⁰⁸ Similarly, Atef El Gamry distinguished between the two terms and argued that Bush's first term witnessed tensions and rifts in transatlantic relations. In his second term Bush to certain extent tried to restore good relations with Europe but never managed to get them back on track because the strategic thinking of the neo-cons was based on unilateral decision making and the disdain of Europe whenever it differed with the United States.¹⁰⁹ Furthermore, D. Mahmud Abazza saw the reason for the change in Bush's second term in the American failure in Iraq and referred to what Winston Churchill mentioned during World War II that "You can always count on Americans to do the right thing - after they've tried everything else."¹¹⁰

Adnan Abu Oda, former head of the Jordan Royal Balat and former minister of culture, argued that Bush realized that Europe was trailing the United States and that it hid itself behind the United States whenever it faced serious troubles. Therefore, in Bush's first term, the president made decisions unilaterally and paid no attention to Europe. However, in the second term, Bush had to consult with Europeans under the pressures in Iraq and Afghanistan yet remained in the role of the leader.¹¹¹ Likewise, Moaphaq Mahaden, columnist of the El Araby El Yoom Newspaper, and Ahmed Said Nufaal referred to this fact arguing that "in the first term, the American policy was more arrogant vis-à-vis Europe. However, in the second term, the Bush

¹⁰⁷ Nafaa, Interview, Cairo, August 30, 2009.

¹⁰⁸ Hamad, Interview, Cairo, September 2, 2009.

¹⁰⁹ El Gamry, Interview, Cairo, September 5, 2009.

¹¹⁰ Abazza, Interview, Cairo, September 5, 2009.

¹¹¹ Adnan Abu Oda, Interview, Amman, January 15, 2010.

administration had to reconsider its policies and to widen it a little for a more European saying under the Iraq quandary.”¹¹²

Meanwhile, Mohamed Abu Hudeb attributed the main reason for the difference between Bush’s first and second term to rising popular resentment in Europe over the American actions, which had eventually led to the collapse of many European governments that supported Bush and the withdrawal of their troops from Iraq. Therefore, Bush had to reconsider his “marginalization” of Europe, had to “consult” with European leaders and ask for their help in Iraq and Iran.¹¹³ D. Mohamed El Masarry summarized the change between Bush’s first and second term by stating that “the only change in Bush’s second term was in his readiness to hear the Europeans; simultaneously Europeans were more eager to reconcile with the United States in the second term.”¹¹⁴

To conclude, the Arab perception towards Bush’s policies in his first and his second term diverged between two opinions: roughly one third of the interview partners saw no change and more than two thirds did. Nevertheless, both groups agreed that while in his second term the American president tried to change in his style and tools under the pressure of failures in Iraq and Afghanistan, he did not change in his strategy or his major strategic goals in the Middle East. The dissertation’s findings largely matched with those of two-thirds of the interview partners. In other words, the dissertation concluded that the second Bush administration brought about considerable changes, particularly with respect to Iraq and Iran, and a symbolic change in its last year with respect to the Palestinian-Israeli conflict.

These interview partners relied profoundly on realistic premises and only marginally on liberalist and constructivist premises. The larger portion of the explanations for this change rested on the administration’s failures in Iraq, Afghanistan, and Iran. Therefore, the Bush administration was in a pressing need for its European allies to share some of its burdens. Also, the Bush administration needed the Arab support to face the emboldened Iran. Therefore it resuscitated the peace process at the end of its tenure through the Annapolis conference, even if it rendered no concrete results. A smaller portion of these explanations rested on liberal assumptions by referring to the change of the neo-cons in Bush’s second administration and the personal influence of Rice’s diplomatic attitude which galvanized US foreign policy. One

¹¹² Moaphaq Mahaden, Interview, Amman, January 19, 2010 and Nufaal, Interview, Amman, January 20, 2010.

¹¹³ Abu Hudeb, Interview, Amman, January 20, 2010.

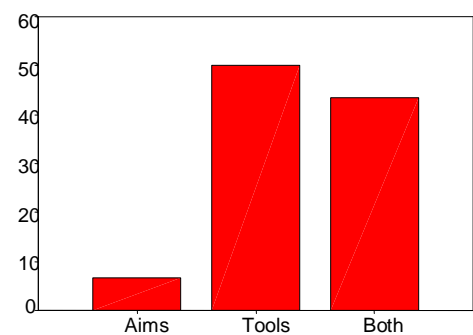
¹¹⁴ El Masarry, Interview, Amman, January 24, 2010.

interview partner referred to the constructivist explanation; the anti-American sentiments that emerged in Europe due to Bush's unilateral policies that led to the isolation of the US, the demise of supportive governments in Europe, and the withdrawal of their troops from Iraq.

▪ **The U.S.–European Diverge in the Middle East: Objectives and Interests, or Tools or Both?**

When asked whether the conflicts between the U.S.A and Europe concerning the Middle East reflect an inbuilt divergence over the aims of the transatlantic partners, or rather good tools to deal with the Middle East or both, the respondents' answers were as follows:

Objectives or tools or both					
		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Aims	3	6.5	6.5	6.5
	Tools	23	50.0	50.0	56.5
	Both	20	43.5	43.5	100.0
	Total	46	100.0	100.0	



While about 6.5% of the respondents described the U.S-European divergence regarding the Middle East as a conflict over aims, about 50% of the sample agreed that the divergence was over the best way to handle the main issues (tools). About 43.5% of the respondents described the conflict between the U.S. and Europe to be over both the aims and the tools for achieving these aims as well. For analytical purposes, it is necessary to return to the interview partners to elaborate more on their responses. Starting with the 6.5% that chose to describe the U.S-European conflict to be based on aims, Ambassador Raouf Saad argued that "both of the U.S. and Europe seek to play a role in the Middle East. Moreover, if one of them could not draw attract the other on his side; it would definitely try to neutralize the other side."¹¹⁵ On the other hand, Nabil Zaky explained this conflict by referring to the Israeli element since, in his opinion, the U.S. considered Israel its reliable front line for any possible confrontation in the Middle East.

¹¹⁵ Raouf Saad (former ambassador in Europe and currently the minister of foreign affairs' assistant), Interview, Cairo, September 8, 2009.

It was true that Europe also supported Israel; however, this support was not equivalent to its American counterpart.¹¹⁶

For the 50 % of interview partners who supported the tool-based explanation for the transatlantic rift, the explanations varied. D. Saed EL Lawendy, for example, said that “when the U.S.- European rift was at its peak, the main reason for such distance was a disagreement over means and tools, rather than over aims.” El Lawendy argued that it was wrongly assumed that Europe opposed the war on Iraq. Indeed, Europe wanted the war to break out and wanted to get rid of Saddam's regime, but not before using up all the international procedures like an international investigation. That is to say that the Atlantic goal was the same, but that Bush's rash action compromised the European leaders. Hence, one can argue that if these policies had been issued after consulting European leaders, the latter's stances definitely would have been entirely different; this was proven during the second term of Bush presidency. At this point, the European policies were subjugated to those of the White House and at least played a significant role in explaining and justifying U.S. policies, if they were not matching them. The illustrative example was that Europe gave up the critical dialogue approach with Iran and adopted the U.S. policies.¹¹⁷ In addition, Ambassador Gamal Bayoumy said that “the Western alliance targeted two things in the Middle East: the transportation lines and the oil. The disagreement can be about the way through which they will achieve what they want.”¹¹⁸

Moreover, D. Gamal Abd El Gwad argued that both Europe and the United States were in the same boat (as they were in the Northern hemisphere, the core of the capitalist system) and that they had common interests in the Middle East, such as stabilizing the region, securing the energy sources, fighting terrorism and preventing the spread of weapons of mass destruction.¹¹⁹ Ambassador Saed Shaliby provided an example for the “tool-based” transatlantic divergence, admitting that “while the United States refuses any kind of interaction with Hamas and Hezbu'Allah, Europe is willing to enter the dialogue and to develop the stances of these groups.”¹²⁰ Furthermore, D. Mohamed Selim referred to the unified common goals of the West in the region and to the fact that these goals are “multidimensional: cultural (spreading the

¹¹⁶ Zaky, Interview, Cairo, August 4, 2009.

¹¹⁷ El Lawendy, Interview, Cairo, July 18, 2009.

¹¹⁸ Bayoumy, Interview, Cairo, August 4, 2009.

¹¹⁹ Abd El Gawad, Interview, Cairo, August 5, 2009.

¹²⁰ Shalaby, Interview, Cairo, August 11, 2009.

western values), economic (ensuring the adoption of the capitalist system as a model) and political (enabling the Israeli model in the region).”¹²¹

Simultaneously, D. Mohammed Abd Ella pointed out that the differences between the United States of America and Europe in respect to tools were due to the fact that the U.S. policies are more influenced by the Jewish lobby than Europe. Those Europeans who supported Israel are “moderates” as they strive for peace, because it supports Israeli security interests, and were opposed to the Israeli settlement policies, because they led to violence and confrontation. Abd Ella argued that “at the end of the day, there is no disagreement on the goals and objectives because each [transatlantic partner] tries to maintain its own interests: Europe focusing on its cooperation with the United States and the latter depending focusing on its hegemony.”¹²²

D. Mustafa Elwy explained that the conflict between the two sides was not related to the goals since “the U.S. hegemony over the Middle East serves the European interests and Europe is unable to adopt any other approach than the American one.” For instance, there was no disagreement over ousting Saddam from Iraq or preventing Iran from developing nuclear weapons. The main disagreement was about whether to deploy military power or not. While Bush preferred to use military power for achieving his goals in Iraq and Afghanistan, some European countries tried to achieve the same goals through diplomacy and the economic sanctions. In this context, Elwy stressed that “the goals of the west are the same, represented in defending Israel and protecting the oil wells, and the difference usually is in terms of the tools and the timing, rather than long-term strategies.” In other words, these differences are tactical differences, not strategic ones. It is true that the European Union may express better understanding of Middle East's issues and initiate solutions to face the illegal migration, but at the end of the day it supports the U.S. positions.¹²³

Along the same lines, D. Sood Qubilaat asserted that “there is no difference between the United States and Europe over the common interests and the goals in the Middle East. Both of them try to ensure their own interests in one way, at the expense of the other countries, but Europe tries this using diplomatic solution while the United States does this by adopting military solutions.”¹²⁴ Using the Iranian example, Adnan Abu Oda reflected on the same idea, admitting

¹²¹ Selim, Interview, Cairo, August 16, 2009.

¹²² Abd Ela, Interview, Cairo, August 16, 2009.

¹²³ Elwey, Interview, Cairo, August 20, 2009.

¹²⁴ Qubilaat, Interview, Amman, January 17, 2010.

that "there is an agreement to prevent Iran from acquiring nuclear weapons; however, the approach is different."¹²⁵ Another perspective was introduced by Dr. Adnan Hayagna who said that "the dominant theory in explaining the U.S. behavior towards Europe is that the United States dominates the world. Hence, it determines the rules of the course of international relations while Europe tries only to change the tools and the approaches. For example, the formula of (5+1) in the Iranian case can be considered as an open U.S. declaration that the United States accepted changing the implementation tools, but not the final goal."¹²⁶ Another example was given by Hussin El Rawashda who illustrated that "the disagreement over the tools is superficial. It is true that there are some deviations in the European stance towards the Israeli violence in Gaza from its American counterpart, however, these are instant deviations not yet consolidated."¹²⁷

The 43.5% of the respondents that agreed that the Euro-American divergences are over the goals as well as the tools had diverse explanations for their points of view. In this context, D.Gehad Oda emphasized that this divergence was not only over the goals, interests and the tools, but also over the values.¹²⁸ In addition, Tark Hassan said that the divergences include both the tools and the goals because "Europe's general aim in the Middle East is development, whilst the United States of America aims at realizing the non-peace logic, creating and managing the conflicts in the region."¹²⁹ On the other hand, D.Abd El Mone'm El Mashat argued that the main goal of the United States of America was protecting and supporting Israel as well as controlling the Middle East, while the European goals were protecting its trade and ensuring its energy security. Also, the nature of the allocated power mattered, as the American power was very "hard" while it's European counterpart can be best described as "soft."¹³⁰ Ambassador Nabil Fahmey explained the difference over the level of the aims and tools by referring to the economic competition between the two sides and the European historical legacy that differs from the American one. Germany, for instance, would not adopt any action against Israel because of

¹²⁵ Abu Oda, Interview, Amman, January 15, 2010.

¹²⁶ Hyagnaa, Interview, Amman, January 18, 2010.

¹²⁷ El Rawashda, Interview, Amman, January 23, 2010.

¹²⁸ Oda, Interview, Cairo, July 18, 2009.

¹²⁹ Hasan, Interview, Cairo, July 20, 2009.

¹³⁰ El Mashaat, Interview, Cairo, July 6, 2009.

its National Socialist past while Spain and Greece would adopt more “balanced” stances. France was the most flexible state in this respect.¹³¹

The picture was not consistent for Dr. Manar El Shorbagy, as she indicated that “the transatlantic differences sometimes are in terms of the goals and sometimes they appear in terms of the implementation and tools. However, during the era of the Bush administration, the differences were over both the goals and the implementation of tools.” El Shorbagy pointed out that whenever the United States sought to achieve its own interests without caring about the European interests, the divergence was over the goals. Whenever the United States sought to achieve its interests after consulting with Europe, the divergence was only over the tools. For example, the divergence between France in the era of Sarkozy and the United States regarding Lebanon focused on the tools, unlike the disagreement between France, under Chirac, and the United States, which centered on the goals.¹³² The same notion was introduced during Atef El Ghamry's interview when he stated that “during the two terms of Bush, the divergence was over both the goals and the tools. But for the Obama administration there is no longer a disagreement.” El Ghamry admitted that if there was a divergence between the two sides in terms of interests and tools, it would be in the field of trade and in the vision of each of them to the sources of the respective national security threat. However, such divergences were hidden.¹³³

In D. Mahmud Abazaa's opinion, the Euro-American divergence in the Middle East is due to two main factors: the composite nature of Europe and the United States and the difference in threat volumes for each of them. The United States of America was a single and developed country militarily, economically and diplomatically, while Europe consisted of a group of different countries that vary in terms of their capabilities, sizes and priorities. Geographically speaking, unlike the United States of America, Europe is closer to the Middle East. Hence, any explosion in the Middle East would have a greater and wider effect on Europe than on the United States. Moreover, Europe is more dependent on the Middle Eastern oil than the United States and closer to the Islamic communities than the United States. Dr. Abazaa quoted what the foreign affairs' committee chairman of the French senate, Xavier de Villepin, said few weeks before the war on Iraq: “The main problem is that if the Middle East exploded, the United States can

¹³¹ Fahmy, Interview, Cairo, July 21, 2009.

¹³² El Shorbagy, Interview, Cairo, August 16, 2009.

¹³³ El Gamery, Interview, Cairo, September 5, 2009.

withdraw from Iraq behind the ocean, but Europe won't be able to withdraw from the Iraqi fire."¹³⁴

From a different angle, D. Samy Al Khazendar attributed the transatlantic divergence mainly to economic interests and the fear of U.S. hegemony of the region rather than to divergence over the tools.¹³⁵ Furthermore, Dr. Zaid Eyadat pointed out that although Europe and the United States have common interests, like: achieving stability and development, fighting extremism and securing Israel; they have different interests. This is reinforced by the fact that each European country has its own interests and goals (Italy in South the Mediterranean, Spain in North Africa, France in the Palestinian-Israeli conflict). Besides, the United States prefers the unilateral approach to the collective diplomacy that Europe prefers."¹³⁶ Meanwhile, D. Waleed Abu Dalboh and Mouphak Mohadeen indicated that the divergence over the tools is permanent, but the goals sometimes differ. Both of them referred to the Palestinian Israeli conflict saying that "while Europe usually is flexible and adopts balanced policies between the Arab and Israel, the United States of America usually aligns with the Israeli side and prefers to act individually."¹³⁷

One can conclude that there are different Arab perceptions regarding whether the Euro-American divergence is over the goals, or the tools or both of them. Still, the most acceptable vision is that the transatlantic divergence in the Middle East is centered in a higher degree on the tools and means, rather than the strategic interests and goals, for instance, protecting the Israeli security, securing the oil flow, fighting terrorism and confronting the Islamic fundamentalism. This conclusion is based on the interview partners' explanations in the three categories established (aims 6.5%, tools 50%, and both 43.5%). Explanations revealed that the smaller percentage, 6.5%, which championed the transatlantic divergence over aims, referred mainly to the transatlantic economic competition over the Middle East's markets as well as to their different degrees of support to Israel.

Consistent with the dissertation's findings, half of the interview partners supported the theory of a transatlantic divergence over tools, referring to the common transatlantic interests in the Middle East: petroleum, Israeli empowerment, Middle East stability, fighting against

¹³⁴ Abazza, Interview, Cairo, September 5, 2009.

¹³⁵ Al Khazendar, Interview, Amman, January 17, 2010.

¹³⁶ Eyadat, Interview, Cairo, January 14, 2010.

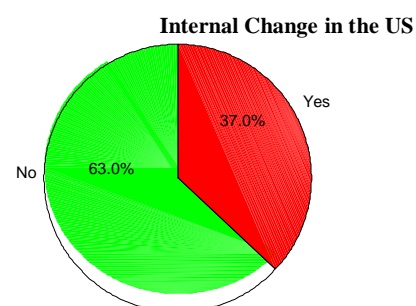
¹³⁷ Abu Dalboh, Interview, Cairo, January 14, 2010 and Mohadeen, Interview, Cairo, January 18, 2010.

terrorism and weapons of mass destruction, and generally control over the Middle East region. For instance, the transatlantic split over Iraq was not over ousting the Iraqi regime, but rather over the appropriate tool and the timing. The same held true for Iran where the transatlantic aim to prevent Iran from acquiring a nuclear weapon was unquestionably identical but the appropriate way, whether by isolation (US) or by diplomacy and negotiations (EU) was the dividing element.

As for the 43% of the interview partners who advocated that transatlantic divergences were over both tools and aims, their justifications explained mainly the transatlantic divergences over tools rather than the broader transatlantic aims in the Middle East. In a sense, their explanations revolved around transatlantic economic competition, different historical experiences, different composite nature, different geographical proximity, different dependency on the Middle East's petroleum, and Europe's fear of the American hegemony over the region. Therefore, the interview partners' overall attitude was that transatlantic divergences are mainly over tools, albeit with some marginal divergences over aims, mainly economic competition and control of the markets.

▪ The Impact of the Internal Change within the U.S. and Europe on the Middle East

When asked about the extent to which domestic change in the United States, chiefly expressed in a change of government, influences U.S. foreign policy towards the Middle East, about 37% of the responses asserted they consider this an influential element in U.S. Middle East politics. However, the bulk of respondents, 63%, argued that a change in the ruling party did not influence U.S. foreign policy in the Middle East.



Internal Change within U.S

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Yes	17	37.0	37.0	37.0
	No	29	63.0	63.0	100.0
	Total	46	100.0	100.0	

Among the explanations of the latter, significantly smaller group, were those of Tark Hassan, who emphasized that “both parties, the Republican and the Democratic, agree on the

main strategic goals in the Middle East; however, there is a difference between the two parties in managing these goals. While the Democratic Party focuses on dialogue, the Republican Party adopts an enforcement and imposition of will policy.”¹³⁸ Ambassador Raouf Saad went further to argue that “the difference between the two parties originates from the fact that each party depends on different think tanks and pressure groups. Still, it is necessary not to exaggerate the difference between the two parties because there are fixed interests, such as supporting Israel, even if the degree of this assumed support will vary along with the ruling party and the administration.”¹³⁹ Moreover, Ambassador Gamal Bayoumy stated that “this effect is related to the way of tackling the issue, not to the main goals.”¹⁴⁰

Another perspective was introduced by Ambassador Abd El Raouf El Redy when he pointed out that “a change of the ruling party is influential, but the American president is the main player, especially when this president is strong, possesses a clear vision and, most importantly, when his people support his actions.”¹⁴¹ In the same vein, Ambassador Saed Shalaby indicated that there are common foreign policy stances between the two parties, based on their commitment towards supporting Israel’s security and its military superiority. Accordingly, the effect of this difference will be clear in how they manage the respective issues. Shalaby gave an example to clarify his point by arguing that “there was a personal commitment on the Democratic Party’s side, as with Carter and Clinton, towards the peace process in the Middle East, while Republican presidents, like Bush, delegated the conflict management to the level of the ministers and envoys.”¹⁴²

D. Mohamed Selim gave a cross-conflict- areas explanation when he said that “regarding the Palestinian-Israeli conflict, there is no difference between the two parties. Nonetheless, there is such a difference in the case of Iraq and Iran for instance, if Al Gore had been elected president [in 2000], September 11th events would not have occurred. The same goes for the occupation of Afghanistan and Iraq.”¹⁴³ Also, D. Manar Al Shorbagy argued that the degree of this effect depended on which wing within each party is analyzed.¹⁴⁴ Abd El Azeem and Atef El Gamry held a slightly different point of view, classifying the degree of support to Israel into two

¹³⁸ Hasan, Interview, Cairo, July 20, 2009.

¹³⁹ Saad, Interview, Cairo, September 8, 2009.

¹⁴⁰ Bayoumy, Interview, Cairo, August 4, 2009.

¹⁴¹ El Redy, Interview, Cairo, August 5, 2009.

¹⁴² Shalaby, Interview, Cairo, August 11, 2009.

¹⁴³ Silem, Interview, Cairo, August 16, 2009.

¹⁴⁴ El shorbagy, Interview, Cairo, August 16, 2009.

categories: full alignment, as the case of the Bush administration, and non-absolute alignment, as the case of other administrations.¹⁴⁵

At the same time, Zaid Ebadat assumed that a change of the ruling party is a highly influential variable because “even if they [the Democratic and the Republican Parties] share the same strategic goals, they differ in terms of prioritizing these goals and the way of realizing them.” For instance, the two parties agreed that Iran represents a major source of threat but the Republicans preferred the antagonistic approach while the Democrats preferred an approach of negotiations and sanctions. In the Iraqi case, unlike the Democrats, the Republicans preferred a permanent U.S. military presence in the country. While Iraq was the forefront of the Republicans’ priorities, Afghanistan was on the top of the Democratic agenda.¹⁴⁶ D. Abdal’Allah Al Nokrashy emphasized a different focus as the main reason for a change in foreign policy. He defines this category by whether the respective party focuses on internal or external issues in its political platform. In this respect, he stated that “the Republican Party put more emphasis on U.S. foreign policy; thus, it displays more concern with the Middle East. The Democratic Party, however, focuses more on economic domestic affairs; hence, it deals with the Middle East in a more elastic and flexible way.”¹⁴⁷

Along the same lines, D. Ghazi Rababa’ stated that “both of the two parties have an extreme view of Arab issues. Unlike the Democratic Party, which adopts diplomatic means in dealing with Arab issues, as manifested in the policies of Clinton and Obama, the Republican Party is the bloodiest in tackling Arab issues, as manifested in the policies of G.W. Bush.”¹⁴⁸ Mohamed Abu Hudeb argued that the difference between the two parties was a matter of methodology, rather of core politics. More precisely, the Republican Party’s policies were more openly aligned with Israel; however the Democratic Party had the same policy, but was hiding it to a greater extent.¹⁴⁹

D. Saed El Lawendy spoke for the majority of the interview partners (63%) that adopted the view that a change in the ruling party did not influence U.S. policies towards the Middle East, when he declared that “there is no difference between the two parties because the United States of America is a superpower with a unified strategic vision and a unified diagnosis of the

¹⁴⁵ Hamad, Interview, Cairo, September 2, 2009 and El Gamry, Interview, Cairo, September 5, 2009.

¹⁴⁶ Ebadat, Interview, Amman, January 14, 2010.

¹⁴⁷ Al Nokrashy, Interview, Amman, January 14, 2010.

¹⁴⁸ Rababa, Interview, Amman, January 16, 2010.

¹⁴⁹ Abu Hudeb, Interview, Amman, January 20, 2010.

enemy. Thus, putting all the hopes on the Democrats is a big illusion.”¹⁵⁰ In addition, Ambassador Nabil Fahmy provided evidence that there was no difference between the two parties in respect to the Middle East, when he elaborated that “all true accomplishments were accomplished with the two parties. Nixon was a Republican; however he reacted positively to the October 6th War. Moreover, the peace agreement between Egypt and Israel was signed in the era of Carter, who was a Democrat, and Oslo came in the era of Clinton, who was a Democrat as well. Even when Bush came to the presidency, it was assumed that he would benefit the Arabs, something that proved to be wrong.”¹⁵¹

Moreover, Nabil Zaky argued that “the common ground between the two parties is quite large, especially regarding some issues like supporting Israel, the stance on Jerusalem, and refusing to put real pressure on Israel to reach a settlement.”¹⁵² Furthermore, Gamal Bayoumy, and Gamal Abd El Gawad argued that “none of the matter is related to the difference between the two parties; rather, it is related to the personality of the American president.”¹⁵³ D. Hasan Nafaa, along with D. Osama El Gazaly Harb, agreed that the differences between the two parties in terms of the U.S. foreign policy, especially in the Middle East, are small; their differences are bigger regarding internal issues, such as education, public health, abortion, gun control and government intervention. Moreover, there are many institutions like the White House, the State Department, the Central Intelligence Agency and Congress that determine the course of U.S. foreign policy.¹⁵⁴

To explain why the difference between the two parties does not have a sizeable effect on U.S. foreign policy, D. Sami Al Khazindar contended that the difference between the two parties is due to the final form of their policies, which can be fierce or soft. Moreover, U.S. foreign policy towards the Middle East is determined by other effective powers such as the Jewish lobby and concerns of the U.S. president that any strategic change in the peace process would cost him re-election and would destroy the historic legacy of U.S. policy in the Middle East.¹⁵⁵ Sood Quobilat assumed that what affects the United States is the reality beyond the bipartisan foreign policy system. He contended that major economic interests, oil and weapons producers as well as

¹⁵⁰ El Lawendy, Interview, Amman, July 18, 2010.

¹⁵¹ Fahmy, Interview, Cairo, July 21, 2009.

¹⁵² Zaky, Interview, Cairo, August 4, 2009.

¹⁵³ Bayoumy, Interview, Cairo, August 4, 2009 and Abd El Gawad, Interview, Cairo, August 5, 2009.

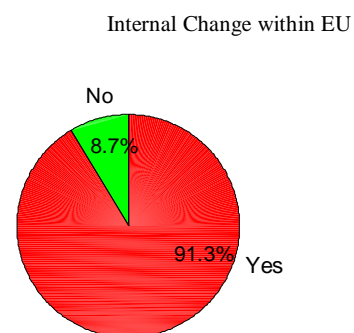
¹⁵⁴ Nafaa, Interview, Cairo, August 30, 2009 and El Gazaly Harb, Interview, Cairo, September 1, 2009.

¹⁵⁵ Al Khazendar, Interview, Amman, January 17, 2009.

multinational corporations determined U.S. policies and they also decided who leads the United States, Obama or Bush.¹⁵⁶ Likewise, Adnan Abu Oda stated that there might be a difference between the two parties' policies towards China, but for the Middle East, the Jewish lobby was the main factor since the Palestinian issue became a U.S. domestic issue that matters in U.S. presidential elections.¹⁵⁷ That is why D. Adnan Hayagna described the difference between the Democratic Party and the Republican with regard to the Middle East to be like the difference between a McDonald's and a Burger King.¹⁵⁸

Furthermore, D. Hisham Gasib elaborated that there was no difference between the two parties in this regard because there was a certain political class in the U.S. (the oil and weapons producers and the media) that had the upper hand as well as fixed global policies, part of which was supporting the Zionist state. The Republican and Democratic Parties were only manifestations of this class that dominated the world. This class also felt that it cannot continue under Bush's policies, especially after the crisis of the U.S. military, Israel's defeat in Lebanon and the global economic crisis. Hence, it was now Obama's turn to alleviate those problems.¹⁵⁹ In this respect, D. Ahmed Saed Nofaal said that "the Democratic and the Republican Party are two sides of the same coin in the Middle East."¹⁶⁰ To explain the differences between the two parties, Hussin El Rawashda referred to the Obama administration's performance in the Middle East: "we expected that the Democrats' policies, under Obama, will be directed to be more balanced in the issues of democracy, human rights, Israel and the Arabs. However, it became obvious that a change of the ruling party and the administration doesn't necessarily mean that there is a change in the U.S. stances towards Arab and Islamic issues."¹⁶¹

Asked about the changes in the most important European governments and whether they affect European foreign policy outcomes, 91.3% of the interview partners agreed that these changes are influential, while 8.7% disagreed.



¹⁵⁶ Qubilat, Interview, Amman, January 17, 2009.

¹⁵⁷ Abu Oda, Interview, Amman, January 15, 2010.

¹⁵⁸ Hayagna, Interview, Amman, January 18, 2010.

¹⁵⁹ Gasib, Interview, Amman, January 19, 2010.

¹⁶⁰ Nofaal, Interview, Amman, January 20, 2010.

¹⁶¹ El Rawashda, Interview, Amman, January 23, 2010.

Internal change within Europe

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Yes	42	91.3	91.3	91.3
	No	4	8.7	8.7	100.0
	Total	46	100.0	100.0	

It was noticeable that 91.3% gave the same examples to clarify the extent to which government changes in Europe affects its policies towards the United States and Middle East issues. The comparison was made between France - Jacques Chirac and Nicolas Sarkozy - (although they belong to the same party) and between Germany - Gerhard Schröder and Angela Merkel - in order to reflect divergences and convergences between Europe and the United States in the Middle East. Another comparison was made between Spain - José Maria Anzar and José Luis Rodriguez Zapatero - to prove the differences between the United States and Europe in their stances in the Middle East. Italy was seen as a country that indicated the fluctuation between the stances of the United States and the European Union under Berlusconi, Romano Prodi and back to Berlusconi. The British model was employed to state the difference between Blair, who supported U.S. policies, and Brown, who also supported U.S. policies but in a more balanced way. Almost all the interview partners agreed that the big difference was over the war on Iraq, rather than over the Palestinian issue or the Iranian nuclear profile.

The explanations among the 8.7% that thought that governmental change in Europe did not affect the European governments' policies towards the United States and the Middle East expressed different points of view. D. Abd El Moenm El Mashaat admitted that "Italy was an exception to the rule that implies that the degree of change in Europe is less than in its counterpart, the United States, and that the personality of the political leaders in Europe is much less influential than the personality of the U.S. president."¹⁶² On the other hand, Ambassador Nabil Fahmey, Mohammed Basiouny and Dr. Mahmud Abazza argued that the effect of the change in Europe is very limited and depends on the interests of each individual country. Still, in their point of view, the main European strategy is fixed and does not change.¹⁶³

In brief, the main Arab trend admitted that domestic change within the United States does not greatly influence U.S. policies towards the Middle East. Even those who argued that the

¹⁶² EL Mashaat, Interview, Cairo, July 6, 2009.

¹⁶³ Fahmy, Interview, Cairo, July 21, 2009, Basiouny, Interview, Cairo, September 29, 2009 and Abazza, Interview, Cairo, September 5, 2009.

change of the ruling party in the United States was influential insisted that such influence appeared in terms of the approach of handling these issues. In other words, they do not see a strategic change in the long-run. The dissertation's findings contradict this conclusion because the 2006 mid-term Congressional elections, which resulted in the victory of the Democrats, highly restrained the Bush administration's policies in the Middle East, whether in Iraq or Iran. Also, the transformation from a Republican to a Democratic administration resulted in several changes in US policies towards Middle East issues, particularly towards Iran and the Palestinian-Israeli conflict, even if it rendered only modest results on the ground.

However, the majority Arab opinion leaders interviewed here supported the idea that governmental change in Europe has a great impact on the European policies towards the Middle East. While this impact does not change European stances regarding the Palestinian issue and Iran, it does in the case of Iraq and European relations with the United States. This conclusion is very consistent with the dissertation's findings that domestic changes in the EU governments resulted in more transatlantic convergences over most of the Middle East issues, particularly in the case of Iraq.

Conclusion:

Out of 46 personal interviews conducted with four groups of Arab professionals (academics, politicians, journalists, and diplomats) in both Egypt and Jordan who were asked about their views of U.S. and European policies towards the Middle East, the results were as follows: The Arab pundits viewed the Bush administration's policies in the Middle East (from 2000-until 2008) in an exceptionally negative way. In some sense, they competed with each other in portraying the Bush administration's aggressiveness, unfairness, offensiveness, confusion, flagrant alignment with Israel at the expense of the Arabs, unilateralism, ideologist and ignorant nature, and all-in-all its unconstructive approach towards Muslims in general and Arabs in particular. Interview partners relied primarily on neo-realist assumptions to enlighten the Bush administration's policies in the Middle East; maintaining US hegemony over the globe through capturing the Middle East's petroleum and sustaining Israel's supremacy, and dismantling the Middle East region. Thereby, the Bush administration invaded Iraq under false allegations and Israel played a crucial role in pushing the United States to conquer Iraq. Also, Israel was a driving force behind the Bush administration's aggressive policies towards Iran as well as its lenient policies towards Israel in the Palestinian-Israeli conflict. Liberal perspectives

were also used, pointing towards the coalition between the Bush administration personnel, the military-industrial complex and the Israeli lobby, as well as the role of the neo-cons and the Christian right. Using a constructionist approach, interview partners referred to the role of ideological premises in the Bush administration, especially the image of the Armageddon war as a crucial explanation to its policies in the Palestinian-Israeli conflict.

Concurrently, the Arab pundits perceived European policies towards the Middle East negatively at large with some positive points in the margin. In a sense, although the Arabs interviewed perceived European politicians as more balanced than their U.S. counterparts in their stances vis-à-vis Middle East issues, these stances were also perceived as unproductive when it comes to real politics. In other words, European stances were depicted as subordinated to the U.S. dictates and even complementary to the American plans in the Middle East. Although most of the Arab pundits perceived European policies to be somewhat different from the United States, this was only noted with respect to the appropriate tools and never with respect to the main strategic goals in the Middle East. Broadly speaking, Europeans were perceived by the Arabs as payers and not as players, as facilitators and not as partners on an equal footing with the United States in the Middle East. Matching the dissertation's neo-realistic findings, the interview partners argued that Europe embraced a bandwagoning strategy towards US policies, especially towards the Palestinian-Israeli conflict. This strategy was anchored in Europe's strategic dependence on the US to address Middle East issues, its lack of CFSP, and the unwillingness of both the US and Israel to give Europe a genuine role in the Middle East unless it was championing US positions. Nonetheless, the interview partners lamented that there was no rock-solid Arab pressure on European countries to take a more balanced stance, particularly towards the Palestinian-Israeli conflict.

If the interview partners detected a fractionally positive role of the European Union in the Middle East it was anchored in liberal assumptions. Unlike Europe, the Bush administration ignored the peace process and focused instead on its global war against terrorism. Nevertheless, those who claimed a positive role of the European Union in the Middle East did not deny its ineptitude as well its subordinated nature to the United States. In fact, this attitude is consistent with the dissertation's findings that Europe sometimes diverges with the United States in the Middle East due to different perceptions and priorities; however both Europe and the United States usually reach a consensus at the end of the day. Inconsistent with the dissertation's

findings, some interview partners claimed that European policies in the Middle East were identical to those of the United States and that both Europe and the United States played a game of role distribution in the Iraq war. In a sense, the French refusal of the American war in Iraq was merely covering the American stance. Conversely, the dissertation claimed that there was a clear divergence over the Iraq war between core Europe and the United States. Later on, convergence became the landmark of the transatlantic policies in Iraq.

As for the nature of the relationship between the American and the European policies in the Middle East, statistical analysis showed that 17.4% inferred full congruence, while 65.2% saw a mixture between convergence and divergence, and 17.4% chose yet a different answer, meaning a European subordination to the United States. However, we can conclude from their responses that the general Arab saw Europe as more converged with the United States despite the existence of some marginal and secondary divergences which tended to shatter on the rock of the western strategic alliance. In other words, there was an Arabic inclination to portray the European policies in the Middle East as subordinated to the United States. Even if some discrepancies emerged on the surface of the transatlantic alliance, they were mainly over the tools and never over the strategic goals of the Western camp. Consistent with the dissertation's findings was the Arab perception which argued that transatlantic differences over the Middle East issues were mainly over details and not over the essence of their policies. Even though there were three categories (full convergence, mixture, and subordinated Europe), the interview partners' explanations exposed that the Arab insight was tending towards describing the transatlantic relationship in the Middle East as more convergent than divergent.

Those in the full convergence category, resting on realist premises, explained the indistinguishable transatlantic interests in the Middle East by the common yearning to secure Israel's security and preeminence, to oppose the Islamic danger, and to topple Hamas. as the emblem for Islam in the region. Other explanations strongly supposed a triple conspiracy among the Bush administration, Europe, and Israel to divide the Arab nation. Similarly, in the mixture category, the interview partners' explanations were analogous to those in the full convergence group. Although the interview partners assumed outward divergences between Europe and the United States, most members of this category argued that ultimately convergence was the signpost of the transatlantic policies.. Explanations for mixed policies were based principally on the Bush's administration unilateral and non-consultant policies, the materialization of a new

power equation in favor of the United States since World War II, and the absence of a concerted European common foreign policy. The exceptionalism of European relations with the Middle East, which brought up some divergences with the United States, were explained by its geographical proximity and its demographic and economic interests that are more critical than that of the United States. The same explanations hold true for the third category (subordination), where Europe's policies were described being cosmetic to those of the United States.

When asked about the difference between the first and the second Bush administrations, the statistical analysis showed that 30.4% of the Arab pundits noticed no difference, while 69.6% did. However, the general Arab trend was that the Bush administration tried to change its style under the pressures of its failures in both Iraq and Afghanistan but never changed its strategy or its ultimate goals. The dissertation's findings were principally consistent with the opinions of two thirds of the interview partners. In a sense, the dissertation argued that the second Bush administration witnessed substantial changes mostly concerning Iraq and Iran and an emblematic adjustment in its last year which respected the Palestinian-Israeli conflict. Interview partners relied overwhelmingly on realistic and slightly on liberalist and constructivist arguments.

The larger segment of this majority explained the change in the second Bush administration with its military and political predicaments in Iraq, Afghanistan, and Iran. As a result, the Bush administration had to reconcile with Europe in order to request burden sharing. Also, the Bush administration faced a more defiant Iran and had to request Arab support in exchange for rejuvenating the peace process. For that reason it was unsurprising that the Bush administration revived the peace process at the closing stages of its second term through the Annapolis conference. A smaller segment of this majority utilized liberal postulates by scrutinizing the change in the neo-cons personnel in the second Bush administration and the delicate weight of Rice's diplomatic approach which spurred US foreign policy. One interview partner referred to the constructivist explanation: the anti-American sentiments that materialized in Bush's unilateral policies and ultimately in the isolation of US policies, the demise of formerly supportive governments in Europe, and the withdrawal of troops from those countries from Iraq.

Similarly, when asked if the differences that emerged on the surface between the United States and Europe with respect to the Middle East were differences over goals and interests or over the most appropriate methods or over both the goals and the tools, the statistical analysis showed that 6.5% of the Arab pundits thought the transatlantic differences were over the goals

and the interests, 50% saw them over the most appropriate tools, and 43.5% thought they were over both the goals and the tools. Nevertheless, the general Arabic trend contended that the genuine European American differences in the Middle East were mainly over the tools and never over the main strategic goals such as protecting Israel's security, guaranteeing a stable oil supply, and fighting terrorism and the Islamic fundamentalism. Interview partners fell into three groups (aims 6.5%, tools 50%, and both 43.5%); their explanations demonstrated that the slighter proportion 6.5% connoted that transatlantic divergences over aims were basically due to economic rivalry over Middle East's markets and over the extent of the support for Israel.

Half of the interview partners claimed that transatlantic divergences were over tools, which was compatible with the dissertation's findings. It asserted that there were established transatlantic interests in the Middle East, namely petroleum, Israel, stabilizing the Middle East, eradicating terrorism and weapons of mass destruction, and generally control over the region. For example, the transatlantic crack over Iraq war did not question ousting the Saddam regime, but rather the proper tool and the timing. Also, a transatlantic endeavor to thwart a nuclear Iran was indisputable. However, there were controversies over the most proper technique, whether it was isolation, sanctions, and even a military strike or diplomacy and negotiations.

Forty-three percent of the interview partners who asserted that transatlantic divergences were over both tool and aims were more inclined to say that transatlantic divergences were principally over tools rather than over the broader transatlantic aims in the Middle East. Primarily, their explanations revolved around transatlantic economic rivalry, a different historical backdrop in the Middle East, a diverse composite nature, dissimilar geographical proximity, a different reliance on Middle East petroleum, and Europe's fear of American domination over the region. Hence, the interview partners' overall outlook was that transatlantic divergences were mainly over tools, albeit with some marginal divergences over aims, largely economic competition and markets control.

As for the extent to which the domestic changes in the United States - specifically the change in power between the Democratic and the Republican Parties - affected the United States' policies in the Middle East, the pundits' answers ranged between 37% that contended this was a decisive factor, whereas 63% thought it was indecisive. The dissertation's findings contradicted the larger portion of the interview partners who claimed the indecisiveness of the domestic change within the United States. The 2006 mid-term Congressional elections highly restrained

the Bush administration's policies in the Middle East, both in Iraq or Iran. In addition, the change from a Republican a Democratic administration caused numerous changes in the United States' policy towards the Middle East issues. However, the general Arab trend tended to argue that a domestic change in American politics was ineffective when it came to U.S. policies in the Middle East. Even those who contended that the change of the ruling party in the United States was a decisive factor affirmed that it was only decisive in the way the issues were addressed and did not bring about a change in the strategic orientations or in America's long-term political goals.

Conversely, when the Arab pundits were asked to what extent domestic changes within European states, particularly changes in major countries, affected their policies towards the Middle East, the statistical analysis showed that 91.3% thought this was a decisive factor; only 8.7% viewed this as indecisive. Nevertheless, the overwhelming majority that saw domestic change in major European governments as decisive contended that they were indecisive pertaining to the Palestinian-Israeli conflict and Iran and that they were only decisive pertaining to the Iraqi crisis and to the nature of Europe's relationship with the United States. This was very compatible with the dissertation's findings which emphasized that domestic changes in the EU governments were highly significant for a more transatlantic convergence on most of the Middle East issues, particularly on the Iraq conflict.

Chapter Seven:

Different Perception, Cynical At Large:

Iraq, Iran, and the Israeli-Palestinian Conflict: An Arabic Perspective.

There was no transatlantic division regarding the Iraqi war. The verbal, rather than the actual divergence was a part of the game that the aged Europe tried to play in order to alleviate the Arab Public's anger on one hand and to facilitate the American project in the region on the other hand.

Mohamed Selim

The Israeli fingers (intelligence agencies) were the first explanation behind the American-European unification against the Iranian nuclear threat. Israel had played a significant role in dragging the United States to the war against Iraq and now it is playing the same role in dragging the United States into a war against Iran.

Hasan Naffa

Europeans negotiated with Iran under the American umbrella.

Ahmed Saed Noffal

The Israeli-Palestinian conflict for the United States is a domestic political issue at first place, while it is a foreign political issue for the European Union.

Mahmud Abazza

The unified western stance against Hamas was a part of a process of prolonging in order not to solve the Palestinian issue as well as to weaken both the Palestinian and the Arab stances for the sake of Israel.

Adnan Abu Odaa

At the beginning there was an Arabic optimism in the aftermath of the Obama's speech at the Cairo University. Nevertheless, we witnessed a retreat from his administration, particularly with respect of the Palestinian issue.

Nabil Zaky

▪ Introduction:

This chapter is again based on interviews with influential and prominent Arab public opinion makers and Arab policy makers. It examines the Arab perception of the transatlantic convergences and divergences with respect to Middle East issues. The answers submitted by academics, journalists, diplomats, and politicians in Egypt and Jordan are this time analyzed to illuminate three case studies: Iraq, Iran, and the Palestinian-Israeli conflict as well as changes in Middle Eastern policies initiated by the Obama administration and the classification of the transatlantic relationship in the Middle East from an Arab perspective. In other words, this chapter digs deeper into the three case studies, sheds more light on the specific reasons behind the transatlantic split over Iraq war in 2003, and looks at as well as the reasons for convergence in the aftermath of the war from the Arab perspective.

In addition, the chapter gives an Arabs' interpretation of the transatlantic rapprochement and divergence over the Iranian nuclear crisis. In other words, the chapter sheds light on the Arab pundits' answers on why the United States and Europe converged over the Iranian nuclear threat although they had different tactics and why the United States permitted Europe to have a bigger role in the crisis, particularly in the negotiation process. Moreover, the chapter gives a special outlook on the Palestinian-Israeli conflict. It argues that a more transatlantic convergence is the rule and divergence is the exception. In this retrospect, the transatlantic policies towards Hamas and the Gaza war were being taken as an illumination of the Arab pundits' perceptions. Furthermore, the chapter examines the Arab perceptions of the Obama administration's performance in the year 2009, particularly with respect to the Palestinian-Israeli conflict. Moreover, the chapter classifies the Arab perceptions of the nature of the transatlantic relationship in the Middle East according to four traditional Arab views. The chapter compares the Egyptian and the Jordanian perceptions towards the transatlantic policies in the Middle East.

Finally, the chapter gives a brief conclusion about the Arab pundits' perception towards the transatlantic policies towards the three case studies; Iraq, Iran, and the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, the Obama's administration, the classification of the transatlantic policies in the Middle East in the Arabs' eyes, and the comparison between the Egyptian and the Jordanian outlook.

▪ The Iraq War from an Arab Perspective

When the interview partners were asked about the main reasons behind the divergence between the United States of America and Europe regarding the decision to go to war in Iraq in 2003, the answers were divided on two levels: the economic and the political level. Some of the political explanations shed light on the fears of the European strategic elites, especially in France and Germany, of U.S. domination in the Middle East and globally since there is a distinction between the European cooperation with the United States and U.S. domination of European decisions. In other words, the core of the French and German refusal centers on their concerns over the autonomy of European political decisions and over the European economic interests in the Middle East, in particular the energy resources and the region's markets. Also, there was a double fear that such decision might lead to the rise of the Anglo-Saxon powers in Europe at the expense of marginalizing the central European powers that oppose the war against Iraq per se.

Other explanations focused on the different approaches in dealing with the issue; deploying military power with no clear justification meant a red light for Europe and this explained why the United States could not get the required nine votes at the Security Council to wage the war. The target U.S. goal of regime change in Iraq was a non-issue, but the way to achieve this target was the moot point. The United States went into this war unilaterally while Europe preferred multiplicity of actors and legal coverage of the war. In addition, the European intelligence was aware of the U.S. maljustification of the war and that the Bush administration fabricated the evidence weapons of mass destruction in Iraq. Although Europe did not want to get involved in a war that lacked international legitimacy, Bush went ahead based on the philosophy that the United Nations should not be an obstacle to American political goals. Similarly, other explanations described the divergence to be superficial because, in the interview partners' opinion, it was about the way the war was presented to the world and not about the decision per se.¹

Part of the explanations adopts a geo-political perspective. Because of the geographical proximity between Europe and the Middle East, the political cost would be higher on Europe than on the United States. Moreover, some of the European countries feared that waging war on Iraq meant to internally destabilize the country and this, in its turn, would lead the region to a new stage of economic and political disorder. Furthermore, some actors would gain a great and

¹ The Author conclusion out of the 46 interviews.

undesired influence in the region, especially Iran. The role of public opinion provided another angle of the interview partners' responses as they referred to the political difficulties of a country that entered the war with a majority of its population opposed to it.

On the economic level, most of the explanations referred to the oil interests of France and Germany in Iraq. The words of Richard Perle, one of the famous hawks in Bush's first administration, that "who refuses to go with us into the club, won't share the dinner", were quoted, with the "club" being the war and the dinner the reconstruction contracts. In other words, the divergence between the two sides was not over the issue of human rights or defending Iraq; rather, it was over the European interests in Iraq. As Europe depends heavily on Iraqi oil, it feared the U.S. control over the Iraqi oil; France in particular held enough debts to guarantee the supply of the Iraqi oil for twenty-five years.²

To provide an interpretation of Europe's internal division over the Iraq war, the interview partners indicated that some Eastern European countries as well as Italy, Spain, Britain and the Netherlands wanted a piece of the economic pie in Iraq, and wanted to participate in the oil and reconstruction contracts. Moreover, those countries wanted to increase their influence both in Europe and globally. D.Saied El Lawendy, a journalist and specialist in transatlantic relations and the Middle East, elaborated on this, saying that "the European countries are not in harmony and it is only the ill Arab mind that views Europe as one mass. Europe looks like the Swiss cheese, full of holes, as there are small and medium countries as well as big countries like Great Britain and France. The conflict evolves between the three categories. The medium countries are ambitious to have a leadership seat, while the small ones complain about the big countries' monopoly of the European Commission. The war on Iraq was the detecting event that revealed all the internal European conflicts."³

Back to history, D. Hassan Nafaa, professor of political science at Cairo University, admitted that the European division is historical as Europe has always been divided into two strands. The first strand, led by France and Germany, is autonomous and traditional and argues that Europe should have a significant role on the regional and international level. The second strand, argues that the European economic progress was due to the United States and that Europe doesn't have the potential of real autonomy. Thus, Europe's future is related to its alliance with

² Ibid.

³ Saied El Lawedy, Interview, Cairo, July18, 2009.

the United States. Great Britain, the Netherlands, Italy and most of the new member states of the EU adopt this latter position.⁴ Agreeing with this analysis, D. Osama El Gazaly Harb, head of El Gabha El Democratya Party and editor-in-chief of Al Syassa Al Dawlya Review, illustrated that "this is a traditional division in European politics. It has historical origins and is related to how near or far the European countries are to the United States."⁵ Both D. Gehad Oda, professor of political science at Helwan University, and Sood Qobilat, head of the Jordanian Writers Association, supported the idea of "U.S. control over Europe" as there was "a strategic alliance between the elites in the new European countries and some of the old European countries, such as Britain, Spain, Italy and the Netherlands, and the United States of America."⁶ Depending on the concept of political opportunity, Abd El Azeem Hamad, editor-in-chief of El Shorouk daily newspaper, stated that "the agreement between the British and the American situations is known. But for the other countries that supported the U.S.A, they tried to make use of this opportunity to magnify their role in the international affairs, hence, in the European Union, by allying with the Bush administration."⁷

Meanwhile, D. Mohammed Selim, professor of political science and international relations at Cairo University, emphasized that "there was no transatlantic division regarding the Iraqi war. The verbal, rather than the actual divergence was part of the game that the aged Europe tried to play in order to alleviate the anger of the Arab public opinion and facilitate the American project on the other hand."⁸

In explaining the situation of the new European countries, Ambassador Nabil Fahmey argued that "these countries' interest was inbuilt in their distance from Russia, which means that they are going to approach the United States, and join the NATO and the European Union. Accordingly, their stance regarding the Iraq war was the price they had to pay in order to ensure their loyalty to the United States and in order to avoid the price of any future cooperation between the United States and Russia."⁹ Agreeing with the latter analysis, Nabil Zaky from the general secretariat for political affairs of the El Tagamoh Party asserted that "the rulers of these countries are followers of the United States and sometimes they are clients. They are looking

⁴ Hasan Nafaa, Interview, Cairo, August 30, 2009.

⁵ Osama El Gazaly Harb, Interview, Cairo, September 1, 2009.

⁶ Gehad Odaa, Interview, Cairo, July 18, 2009 and Sood Qobilat, Interview, Amman, January 17, 2010.

⁷ Abd El Azem Hamad, Interview, Cairo, September 2, 2009.

⁸ Mohamed Silem, Interview, Cairo, August 16 2009.

⁹ Nabil Fahmey, Interview, Cairo, June 21, 2009.

forward to receiving the U.S. financial aid, and their joining of NATO especially means that their countries' arms systems will be definitely developed through the U.S. support."¹⁰ Similarly, Ambassador Gamal Bayoumy stressed "money, money, money", indicating that these countries yearned for U.S. support as well as for part of the Iraqi cake.¹¹

Ambassador Saed Shalaby held a similar view and emphasized that their history of Socialism and Soviet hegemony still affected the politics of those countries. In order to get rid of this hegemony, they had to establish strong ties with the United States, which they saw as their protector from Russia.¹² Therefore, these countries are "puppet governments that are heavily supported by the United States," added D. Manar El Shorbagy, professor of political science at the American University in Cairo.¹³ At the same time, D. Mohammed Abd Ella, head of the committee of foreign affairs at the National Democratic Party, said that "these countries follow the U.S. compass."¹⁴ Also, D. Sami Al Kahzindar, professor of political science at the Hashemite University and Ambassador Mohammed Al Oraby's pointed out that "these new European countries were looking forward to joining the U.S. camp and NATO and they had to pay for this and Iraq was the price."¹⁵ D. Badr El Maady, professor of political science shed light on the fear factor, saying that "the United States still can practice greater influence on some of the European countries than the European Union."¹⁶ Adnan Abu Oda described this in the following words: "These countries are more dependent on, needy to and coping with the United States and less confronting to its will."¹⁷ All the rest of the respondents argued that agreeing to the Iraqi war was that these new European countries had to pay in order to enjoy U.S. political and economic support.

¹⁰ Nabel Zaky, Cairo, interview, August 4, 2009.

¹¹ Gamal Bayoumy (Secretary General of the General secretariat of Egyptian European Association Agreement and a former Ambassador in Europe), interview, Cairo, August 4, 2009.

¹² El Saed Shalaby (Executive Director of the Egyptian Council of Foreign Affairs), interview, Cairo, August 11, 2009.

¹³ Manar El Shorbagy, interview, Cairo, August 16, 2009.

¹⁴ Mohamed Abd Ella, interview, Cairo, August 16, 2009.

¹⁵ Sami El Kazendar (General Director of the Academic Center for Political Studies), interview, Amman, January 17, 2010 and Mohamed El Oraby (former Ambassador in Germany and currently the Minister of Foreign Affairs' Assistant), interview, Cairo, December 15, 2009.

¹⁶ Bader El Maady (Prof of Political Science-Faculty of Arts, Department of Political Science- University of Jordan), Interview, Amman, January 13, 2010.

¹⁷ Adnan Abu Oda (former head of the Jordan Royal Balat and former Minister of Culture and member of the International Crises Committee), Interview, Amman, January 15, 2010.

When asked about the reason for the convergence between Europe, specifically France and Germany, and the U.S. after the Iraq war, most of the answers centered on the notion that this was a requirement for both sides to deal with post-war reality. Bush's second administration wanted to gain European support in Iraq and Europe wanted to have its share in the Iraqi cake and put an end to its divergence with the United States. Many analysts concluded that Bush's second administration represented a distinctive departure and that Condoleezza Rice engineered the change that it ended transatlantic divergence. The increasing U.S. losses in Iraq pushed the country to realize that it needed European support. Thus, it became clear that this situation was an implicit settlement of a bilateral divergence on one hand and an implicit role distribution on the other hand.

Looking at Europe, most of the analysts, if not all of them, agreed that the first factor that led Europe to cooperate with the United States in the period after the Iraq war was the European greediness to reap economic benefits, such as reconstruction contracts, oil contracts and remilitarization contracts. Others assumed that there was a French-German bet that the war on Iraq would not be won easily and that the United States would find itself in substantial difficulties. However, the quick U.S. victory over Saddam shocked these countries and led them to think pragmatically about their interests in post-war Iraq which they could not reach without cooperating with the United States. Hence, there was a Euro-American agreement to redefine the situation after the war. In other words, there was a pragmatic European vision under the motto "If you can't beat them, join them".

A third group of the analysts was optimistic about the European presence in Iraq and viewed it as a necessity that might curb the American rush steps in Iraq. Nonetheless, the U.S. failure in Iraq was not advantageous for Europe because of the geographical proximity that made the unsettled situation in Iraq more dangerous for Europe than for the United States. Accordingly, Europe had to cooperate with the United States in Iraq to re-stabilize the situation, especially after the outbreak of violent activities that threatened Europe's interests in the Middle East. Also, knowing that the European countries had to deal with Bush for four years to come at this time was among the factors that made Europe choose to re-approach with the United States regarding all the issues of the Middle East. Based on the fact that the transatlantic divergence in Iraq was between allies, rather than enemies, there was no need for a confrontation between Europe and the United States, especially because of the government changes in France and

Germany. This explained why Europe, after failing to prevent the United States from waging the war, did not leave the western alliance. Rather, Europe tackled the issue with some sort of pragmatism and a sense for political and economic opportunity.

To sum up, most of the analysts concluded that the transatlantic divergence over Iraq was related to the means and tools, rather than the ultimate goal. Moreover, there was a quasi-consensus that Europe re-approached the United States because of its economic interests, while the latter approached the former as a result of its failure in Iraq and its inability to bear all the economic and military costs of the war alone.

Theoretically, the interview partners resorted chiefly to realistic and sometimes to liberalist explanations for the transatlantic rift of the Iraq war in 2003. The realist explanations revolved mainly around Europe's fear of a dominant US that might extremely constrain Europe's economic interests in the Middle East as well as the EU fear of a new balance of power on the continent. Core Europe (Germany and France) was afraid of being marginalized for the sake of Atlantic Europe (Britain, Italy, Spain, the Netherlands, and new European member states) and vice versa. Also, European intelligence agencies were doubtful about the Bush administration's allegations that Iraq possessed weapons of mass destruction. Furthermore, Europe feared that invading Iraq would destabilize the entire Middle East and that it would be more affected than the US because of its geographical proximity to the region; also, such an invasion would increase the influence of Iran. However, the interview partners concentrated mainly on the economic interests of core Europe as a driving force behind the rejection of the Iraq war and also referred to the historical division within Europe between Atlanticism and Europeanism. Most of these explanations were supported by the dissertation's findings. Nonetheless, the dissertation's findings were more comprehensive and made a distinction between the EU-US level and the US-EU member states level to indicate that each big European member state had its own reasons for championing or rejecting the war, which surpassed the economic reasons.

Some interview partners argued from a liberal perspective, namely that the Bush administration preferred unilateralism whereas core Europe advocated multilateralism. Nevertheless, they did not interpret this transatlantic divergence. The dissertation's findings argued that this was because there was a value gap between Europe and the Bush administration regarding international systems and international institutions which materialized in the neo-cons' control over the first Bush administration. Also, the dissertation's findings referred to another

domestic reason for the French and German rejection of the war – using it as the winning argument for both Schröder and Chirac in their elections. Unlike the dissertation, the interview partners did not employ constructivist explanations. This was partly because the Arab pundits perceived the transatlantic values as common, western, identical, and taken for granted.

▪ **The Iranian Nuclear Program from an Arab Perspective**

Being asked whether there was a transatlantic convergence over the Iranian nuclear crisis and why the United States allowed Europe to play a bigger role in negotiating with Iran, most of the pundits affirmed that the transatlantic convergence was mainly over the danger of an Iran with nuclear weapons; they also affirmed that both Europe and the United States diverged over the tools to settle this crisis. Europe stuck to dialogue and negotiations, whereas the Bush administration opted for sanctions and the threat to use its military power. Most of the pundits affirmed that the transatlantic convergence over the most appropriate tools towards Iran did not materialized until Obama took office. Exemplifying this attitude, D. Mohamed Abd Ella argued that “there was a U.S.-European feeling of the Iranian nuclear danger because it would cause a strategic misbalance in the Middle East and in the Arab Gulf. Nevertheless, unlike the United States, Europe refused the use of force against Iran or even to repeat the Iraqi model. Instead, Europe opted for dialogue and negotiations as the best tools to achieve the western interests.”¹⁸

Most of the pundits agreed that the western aims towards Iran were unified behind one broader aim, which was to prevent the emergence of any regional and influential power in the Middle East. In other words, so far Israel had been the only allowable regional and influential power in the Middle East in the western perception because it had always guarded the western interests. The pundits reinforced their arguments by referring to the historic western attempts to strike down any regional power that sought to have a bigger influence in the Middle East, such as Egypt in the eras of Mohamed Ali and Gamal Abd El Nasser and now Iran.

In addition, the pundits agreed that the unifying factor behind the transatlantic convergence over the Iranian crisis was not only the danger of an Islamic state possessing nuclear weapons but also and more influentially the Israeli factor. D. Hasan Nafaa argued that “the Israeli fingers (intelligence agencies) were the first explanations behind the American-European unification against the Iranian nuclear threat, particularly for explaining the extreme American stance against Iran. Israel had played a significant role in dragging the United States

¹⁸ Abd Ella, Interview, Cairo, August 16, 2009.

into the war against Iraq and now it is playing the same role in dragging the United States into a war against Iran.”¹⁹ Likewise, D. Mustafa El Feqy, head of the Committee of Foreign Affairs at the Egyptian People’s Assembly, contended that “Israel has been the main source for frightening the western alliance from the Iranian danger. For that reason I expect that any military attack against Iran would be initiated by Israel and would be met with little enthusiasm by the United States.”²⁰ Moreover, most of the pundits agreed that the Iranian rhetorical escalation against Iran, Mahmud Ahmdy Negad’s threat to wipe Israel from the map and his denial of the Holocaust, were an effective factor in unifying the west against Iran.

An Arab unanimity materialized over the reasons behind the American desire to have Europe play a bigger role in negotiating with Iran. Many interview partners argued the United States gave Europe explicit permission to negotiate with Iran because it was deeply involved in two wars in Afghanistan and Iraq and thus established some sort of role distribution between Europe and the United States. To signify this attitude, Ambassador Rauf Saad indicated that “the whole question was nothing but role distribution because the United States, unlike Europe, was not the best candidate for negotiating with Iran. Nonetheless, the United States was highly informed second by second of the latest results of the European negotiations with Iran.”²¹ Along the same lines, Samy El Kazendar asserted that “Europe was the best tool in the hands of the United States to achieve the western goals with respect to the Iranian quandary.”²² Moreover, the journalist, Hazem Ayaad contended that “Europeans do not engage in any crisis unless the United States allows them once it feels that the heavy burdens should be shared with Europe.”²³ Furthermore, D. Adnan Hayanga, professor of political science at Hashemite University, affirmed that “Europeans can do nothing without an implicit American consent. Therefore, when Europe negotiated with Iran, the United States was an indirect partner.”²⁴ This situation was summarized by D. Ahmed Saed Nofaal, a professor of political science at Yarmouk University, who said that “Europeans negotiated with Iran under the American Umbrella.”²⁵

¹⁹ Nafaa, interview, Cairo, August 30, 2009.

²⁰ Mustafa El Feqy, interview, Cairo, September 27, 2009.

²¹ Raouf Saad (former Ambassador in Europe and currently the Minister of Foreign Affairs' Assistant), interview, Cairo, September 8, 2009.

²² El Kazendar, interview, Amman, January 17, 2010.

²³ Hazem Ayaad, interview, Amman, January 18, 2010.

²⁴ Adnaan Hyagnaa, interview, Amman, January 18, 2010.

²⁵ Ahmed Said Nofaal, interview, Amman, January 20, 2010.

Along with these explanations it was argued that the soaring costs and dangers of an American military strike against Iran were among the reasons of the American delegation to Europe to negotiate with Iran and even to allow Europe to play a bigger role in the Iranian dilemma. An illustrative example was given by Nabil Zaky, who argued that a military strike in Iran would mean the closing down of the Strait of Hurmoz and subsequently an immense rise in oil prices, the danger that American troops in Iraq would be taken hostage, an Iranian threat to strike Israel, and the engagement of Hezbollah and Hamas to sustain Iran. Besides, an American military strike against Iran would not terminate the Iranian nuclear project. Instead, it would only delay the program for a few years because the Iranian nuclear facilities are spread throughout the country.²⁶

Unlike the dissertation's findings, the interview partners did not perceive a clear-cut transatlantic divergence over the tools regarding the Iranian dilemma from 2002 until 2005. According to the dissertation, the EU refused numerous American attempts, until the end of 2005, to take the Iranian case from IAEA to the Security Council as a prelude to imposing sanctions and even striking Iran. Although the interview partners maintained that there was a transatlantic divergence over the proper tools regarding Iran, they also proclaimed that this divergence was merely a sort of role distribution and that Europe would not have taken these more concerted positions towards and negotiations with Iran without US consent. Unlike the dissertation's findings, the interview partners did not differentiate between the different transatlantic perceptions of the Iranian regime as a reason for a transatlantic divergence over the appropriate tools for the Iranian case. For instance, the Bush administration conducted a strategic nuclear agreement with India in 2005, at the peak of the Iranian crisis, and regarded India as a responsible state as opposed to Iran, which it considered a rogue state.

When asked about the reasons for the transatlantic convergence over Iran's nuclear dilemma, the interview partners relied on realist premises focused basically on the magnitude of the Israeli element and argued that the Western alliance was united over thwarting the materialization of any regional power that might change the strategic balance in the Middle East unfavorably. The dissertation's findings, on the other hand, mentioned other numerous reasons for this convergence: the overstretching of American military and soft power, the rising costs and dangers of a possible military strike, the rise of a more emboldened and defiant Iran, and the

²⁶ Zaky, interview, Cairo, August 4, 2009.

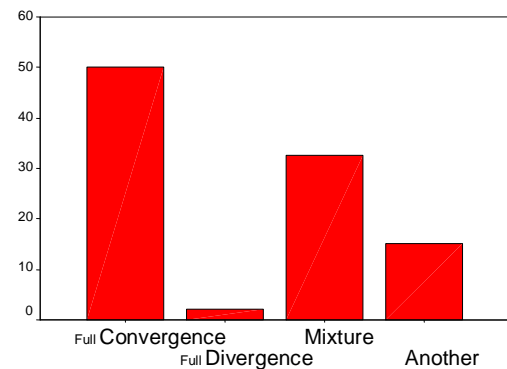
augmentation of the American predicaments in Iraq and Afghanistan. The Arab pundits' focus on the Israeli element and the Western desire to stop the emergence of any regional power such as Iran is derived mainly from their historical experience with the west: Mohamed Ali, Gamal Abd El Nasser, and now Iran.

Furthermore, the interview partners did not refer to liberalist explanations for the transatlantic convergence over Iran. Conversely, the dissertation's findings pointed out the change in the personnel of the Bush's second administration personnel (former so-called hawks) into more pragmatic personalities. It also referred to the decline of the Bush's popularity in the United States and the change in many European governments that worked in favor of more transatlantic convergence over Iran.

▪ The Israeli-Palestinian Conflict from an Arab Perspective

When asked about the nature of the relationship between the European and the American policies regarding the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, half of the respondents (50%) argued it was in a full convergence, one-third (32.6%) answered it was a mixture between convergence and divergence, (15.2%) gave a different answer, and only a fraction (2.2%) perceived a full divergence as shown in the following diagram and table.

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid Full Convergence	23	50.0	50.0	50.0
Full Divergence	1	2.2	2.2	52.2
Mixture	15	32.6	32.6	84.8
Another	7	15.2	15.2	100.0
Total	46	100.0	100.0	



One half of the respondents, perceived this relationship as a full convergence, but their explanations diverged. For instance, D. Saed El Lawendy commented that the talk about a European common foreign policy towards the Israeli-Palestinian conflict "lacked evidence". Europe was an economic giant but a political dwarf, and Solana's declarations represented no one but him and resulted in nothing. Therefore, Europe was in full convergence with the United

States, particularly with respect to the Palestinian-Israeli conflict.²⁷ Along the same lines, Sood Qubilat, the head of the Jordanian Writers' Association, argued that Europe has nothing to offer in the conflict but to open channels of dialogue with some powers such as Hamas and to provide conditional aids. In other words, Europe differs in no respect with the United States but in its constant diplomatic movement, which usually leads to nothing but an alleviation of severe tension.²⁸

Ambassador Gamal Bayomy, Ambassador Saed Shalaby and D. Hasan Nafaa added a different perspectives; they saw the relationship as being much closer to a full convergence over sustaining Israel's security and regional military superiority albeit with some divergences over the Israeli behavior and over what is required from Israel to move forward in the peace process, such as a settlement moratorium and accepting the concept of the two-states solution. These transatlantic divergences are mostly attributed to the European proximity to the Middle East as well as the different effectiveness of the Israeli lobby within both the United States and Europe.²⁹

D. Mohamed Selim, professor of political science and international relations at Cairo University, perceived the relationship as more severe, being in "a full convergence that is closer to identical." According to Selim, both the United States and Europe share the vision that Israel should not withdraw from the 1967 borders and should keep its settlement. This became evident when Bush gave Sharon a letter of guarantees that no European state would protest. Besides, Israeli goods, manufactured in settlements in the Golan Heights and the West Bank, were being sold openly on European markets, a considerable sign of European support of the Israeli settlement activities.³⁰ For the same reasons, D. Sami El Kazendar saw the relationship as being in "a full convergence over the strategic goals," such as securing Israel's survival, a peaceful solution to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, establishing a Palestinian state through negotiations, and the non-return of the Palestinian refugees. Notwithstanding, there was a tactical transatlantic divergence because some European states, such as France, desired to hold an independent role in the conflict; other states, such as Sweden, focused on a humanitarian and even ethical perspective; yet other states, such as Germany, desired to have a mediating role in the security

²⁷ El Lawendy, interview, Cairo, July 18, 2009.

²⁸ Sood Qubilat, interview, Amman, January 17, 2010.

²⁹ Gamal Bayomy (Secretary General of the General Secretariat of Egyptian European Association Agreement and a former Ambassador in Europe), interview, Cairo, August 4, 2009, Shalaby, interview, Cairo, August 11, 2009 and Nafaa, interview, Cairo, August 30, 2009.

³⁰ Mohamed Silem, interview, Cairo, August 16 2009.

and the humanitarian sector, for example through an agreement to exchange the prisoners.³¹ In a clear-cut language, Amer El Taal concluded that “as a rule whenever it comes to Israel’s affairs, a great American European convergence materializes on the ground.”³²

Unsurprisingly, the one-third of the interview partners that perceived the transatlantic relations as a mixture of convergence and divergence did not differ in their explanations to a great extent from those who realized it as a full convergence. Nevertheless, they preferred to portray the relationship as a mixture that is closer to convergence despite their consensus on the impotence and the ineffectiveness of the European Union in the Middle East. For instance, D. Gehad Odaa blamed Europe because “it has nothing to do with the Israeli-Palestinian conflict but a limited financial and developmental role.”³³ Nevertheless, most of this group positively praised the more balanced European stances towards the conflict notwithstanding its ineffectiveness. For example, Tark Hasan, editor in chief of El Ahram El Massai daily newspaper, contended that “Europe is more credible than the United States when it comes to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict.”³⁴

Likewise, D. Abd El Moneem El Mashaat, professor of international relations at the Future University, argued that “Europe shows a more humanitarian sympathy towards the Palestinians than the United States does.”³⁵ Similarly, D. Osama El Gazaly Harb contended that “Europe tends to listen more to the Arab claims and complaints than the United States which is utterly biased towards Israel.”³⁶ In a clear-cut explanation of the transatlantic mixture of convergence and divergence, D. Mahmud Abazza, Head of the opposition Al Wafd Party, claimed that “both Europe and the United States sustain Israel, but both also differ in the degree of their support. This is because for the United States the Israeli-Palestinian conflict is predominantly a domestic political issue while it is a foreign political issue for the European Union.”³⁷ D. Walled Abu Dalboh, professor of political science at the University of Jordan, summed up the Arab perception by asserting that “Europe is more flexible, closer to, and understanding of the conflict than the United States.”³⁸

³¹ El Kazendar, interview, Amman, January 17, 2010.

³² Amer El Taal (journalist and a daily writer in Al Dostoor Newspaper), interview, Amman, January 16, 2010.

³³ Odaa, interview, Cairo, July 18, 2009.

³⁴ Tarek Hasan, interview, Cairo, July 20, 2009.

³⁵ Abd El Monem El Mashaat, interview, Cairo, July 6, 2009.

³⁶ El Gazaly Harb, interview, Cairo, September 1, 2009.

³⁷ Mahmud Abbaza, interview. Cairo, September 7, 2009.

³⁸ Waleed Abu Dalboh, interview, Amman, January 14, 2010.

The fifteen percent that opted for “another answer” ranged mainly between asserting that Europe is ultimately subordinated to the United States and claiming that Europe plays a complementary role to the United States in the Middle East. For instance, both Ambassador Abd El Raof El Ready and Nabil Zaky emphasized that Europe was utterly dependent on the United States and did nothing to move the peace process forward. More specifically, the Quartet did nothing to become visible in the conflict and Europe provided only money and infrastructure to the Palestinian authority.³⁹ Likewise, D. Manar El Shorbagy, professor of political science at the American University in Cairo, portrayed Europe as “out of the game” because Israel did not want an independent European role. To illustrate this, El Shorbagy pointed out the difference between the crimes of the Holocaust and the Holocaust industry. “The Holocaust atrocities were committed against millions of Jews, but the Holocaust industry has turned into a world-wide endeavor, exploited by Jewish powers, to attain gains for Israel, to be used against Europe, the United States, and against anybody who says no to Israel.”⁴⁰

Along with the explanations of the European dependency on the American stances in the Middle East, Ambassador Hasan Abu Nehma gave two examples of the Palestinian problem to illustrate Europe’s subordination to the United States. The first example was that when the United States decided to boycott and even to isolate Hamas after it had been democratically elected in 2006, no European country refused or abstained from this situation. The second example was the fact that Europe was and still is ready to spend money in order to distance itself from the charge of being indecisive towards the Palestinian issue. The genuine proof was that Europe spent millions of Euros to build the Gaza airport and to establish a strong infrastructure in the West Bank. Nevertheless, when Israel destroyed these infrastructures, Europe did not dare to ask Israel for compensations.⁴¹

From a different angle, both D. Gamal Abd El Gawad from the El Ahram Newspaper and Adaan Abu Oda, the former Jordanian minister of culture, agreed that Europe played a complementary role to the United States in the Middle East. Abd El Gawad argued that “Europe applies complementary policies to the United States’.” For instance, if the United States sponsored the Oslo accords, Europe financed the Palestinian state. Likewise, if the United States

³⁹ Abd El Raof El Ready (former Ambassador at the United States and head of the Egyptian Council of Foreign Affairs), interview, Cairo, August 5, 2009 and Zaky, Cairo, interview, August 4, 2009.

⁴⁰ Manar El Shorbagy, interview, Cairo, August 16, 2009.

⁴¹ Hasan Abu Nehmaa (former Ambassador and head of the center for dialogue among Religions), interview, Amman, January 19, 2010.

paid no attention to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, as in the Bush era, Europe took the lead – the Quartet was initially a Danish proposal.⁴² Abu Oda depicted the European complementary role to the United States in the Middle East as being “the alleviating element to the Arabs that the United States utilizes.” For instance, when Sweden proposed that Eastern Jerusalem became the capital of the Palestinian state, the United States could not propose a similar suggestion. On the other hand, Europe used the United States as a pretext in order not to get directly involved in the Israeli-Palestinian conflict.⁴³

As for the small minority (2.2%) that depicted the American-European policies towards the Middle East as diverging, its proponents claimed that the sole divergence was mainly over the final goal. It was particularly D. Bader El Maady who argued that “whereas Europe faithfully attempts to make peace between the Palestinians and the Israelis, the United States is ultimately paying no attention to the Palestinians and the driving force beyond its policies is only the security issues that Israel suffers.”⁴⁴

To conclude, there is a general Arab attitude that detects a transatlantic convergence and a European role subordinated to the United States with respect to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict - more obviously and clearer than concerning any other issue in the Middle East. This is mainly attributed to the unifying Israeli factor. In other words, both Europe and the United States agree over protecting Israel’s security, even if they differ over the best tactics. Simultaneously, both Europe and the United States are pressured by Israel, albeit with different tools. In other words, the Israeli lobby within the United States plays a larger role in forcing the United States to go along with the Israeli policies, whereas the Holocaust industry and charges of anti-Semitism are used against any European state that attempts to take a more balanced stance towards the conflict.

Although there were four categories of interview partners, their realist explanations largely matched the dissertation’s findings that the United States took the lead and Europe followed in the Palestinian-Israeli conflict, even if they gave different reasons. Most of the Arab pundits in the first three categories affirmed that Europe was an economic giant but a political dwarf, particularly with respect to the Palestinian-Israeli conflict. They also asserted that when it came to Israel, there was a constant strategic transatlantic convergence. Nevertheless, most of the

⁴² Gamal Abd El Gawad, interview, Cairo, August 5, 2009.

⁴³ Adnan Abu Oda, interview, Amman, January 15, 2010.

⁴⁴ El Maady, interview, Amman, January 13, 2010.

interview partners made a distinction between the positive statements and announcements of the EU towards the Palestinian-Israeli conflict and the real effects on the ground which were perceived as very small. In a sense, most of the interview partners assured that Europe showed more sympathy for and more willingness to take Arab rights seriously, less support for Israel compared to the United States, and more flexibility and understanding for the conflict realities. Nevertheless, they also asserted that Europe was ineffective, subordinated, and sometimes complementary to the American stances.

Contrasting with the dissertation findings, which argued that Europe has always suffered from the Israelis and the American lack of enthusiasm to play a genuine role in the conflict, most of the interview partners maintained that Europe took the United States as an excuse for not taking a solid position and that it only played a complementary role and acted as an alleviating element to the American policies in the conflict.

The answers of the interview partners regarding Hamas in the 2006 election and the Gaza war in 2008-2009 were illustrative of such a general Arab attitude. Since both Europe and the United States agreed to refuse to deal with the democratically elected Hamas in 2006, the Arab pundits unanimously contended that the West has long been adopting a double-standard policy towards the Arab and the Muslim world – it calls for elections, praising the elections' integrity and then refuses to accept their results. The explanations for the transatlantic convergence over boycotting Hamas ranged from a European-American agreement to face the danger of Islamic fundamentalism and Hamas's refusal to comply, over charging the Palestinians, and not Israel, of being the main reason of stalling the peace process, to the fear of the moderate Arab regimes of the spread of the Hamas model in the region.

Most of the Arab pundits consistently portrayed the fight against the danger of Islamic fundamentalism as represented in Hamas and Hezbollah as the main reason for the transatlantic convergence over Hamas. For instance, both D. Refaat El Saaed and Nabil Zakey argued that Hamas wanted to establish an Islamic state, which increased the fears of Europe and the United States alike.⁴⁵ Similarly, Ambassador Abd El Raof El Ready asserted that "the western stance against Hamas has become traditional in the context of its refusal of the Jihad movements, particularly those which cooperate with Iran." From the outset, the European states initially wanted to deal with Hamas and Hezbollah, but the United States imposed their will on the

⁴⁵ El Saaed, interview, Cairo, August 4, 2009 and Zaky, interview, Cairo, August 4, 2009.

Europeans to boycott and even blockade both movements.⁴⁶ Following this explanation, D. Mohamed Abd Ella contended that “there is a western phobia that extreme Islamic movements take control in the Arab states.” Hence, Islamic fundamentalism was a unifying factor behind the transatlantic convergence over Hamas. Even though Europe showed more political flexibility to deal with Hamas, at the end of the day it matched the American stance⁴⁷. Ambassador Saed Shalaby asserted that “compared with the American stance, the European stance was more advanced because Europe was willing to cooperate and hold dialogue with Hamas if it committed to recognize Israel and to wipe out violence.”⁴⁸ Likewise, Ambassador Nabil Fahmey confirmed the same idea by arguing that “Europeans were almost ready to talk with Hamas if it crafted any formula that does not mention destroying Israel.”⁴⁹

Another group of pundits attributed the European-American refusal to recognize Hamas to the Israeli factor. In a sense, this refusal intended to prolong the Palestinian issue and to show that the Palestinian side was responsible for stalling the peace process and not the Israeli arrogance. For instance, Adnan Abu Oda contended that “Europeans and Americans know that the genuine hindrance of peace is Israel. Therefore, both wait for any trouble on the Palestinian side to justify their inactiveness to solve the conflict.”⁵⁰ In the same vein, Tark Hasan commented that when the pretext of Arafat’s blockade and the non-existence of a Palestinian partner ended, another pretext, Hamas, was brought to the fore to insist that the problem was on the Palestinian and not on the Israeli side.⁵¹ Keeping with these explanations, Sood Qubilat argued that both Europe and the United States did not want to leave the pre-designed track (negotiation for negotiation, crisis management, and not reaching to any solutions). To the west, Hamas operated outside this track; therefore both Europe and the United States turned a blind eye to democracy and refused the results of the Palestinian elections.⁵² Mohamed Abu Hedeab agreed to this by referring to the unified western stance against Hamas, which was “a part of a process of prolonging in order not to solve the Palestinian issue as well as to weaken both the Palestinian and the Arabic stances for the sake of Israel.”⁵³

⁴⁶ El Ready, interview, Cairo, August 5, 2009.

⁴⁷ Abd Ella, interview, Cairo, August 16, 2009.

⁴⁸ Shalaby, interview, Cairo, August 11, 2009.

⁴⁹ Fahmy, interview, Cairo, July 21, 2009.

⁵⁰ Abu Oda, interview, Amman, July 15, 2009.

⁵¹ Hasan, interview, Cairo, July 20, 2009.

⁵² Qubilat, interview, Amman, January 17, 2010.

⁵³ Abu Hedeab, interview, Amman, January 20, 2010.

Israel's assault against Gaza in 2009 was practical evidence of the Arab vision that there was a full transatlantic convergence with respect to Hamas, albeit with some European distinctions on the humanitarian aspect when it comes to the Israeli atrocities and the Palestinian victims. D. Saed El Lawendy pointed out that "in Bush's second term, both the United States and Europe turned out to be two faces of the same coin." El Lawendy signified his opinion by referring to the fact that in the beginning Europe had been talking about conducting a dialogue with the flexible representatives of Hamas; however both the United States and the moderate Arab regimes were outraged. Therefore, the Arab regimes used the United States' leverage to prevent Europe from talking to Hamas. Rapidly, Europe stepped back from the dialogue with Hamas and in next to no time Javier Solana demanded that Hamas discarded its military weapons as a precondition to resume the dialogue.⁵⁴

Most of the Arab pundits agreed that it was the European-American aim to give Israel the time and the chance to finish Hamas militarily and politically because it was considered an extreme entity that obstructed the peaceful negotiation track. In addition, there was an Arabic unanimity that the Security Council's resolution 1860 was intended mainly to cement the war's results and that the transatlantic convergence over the resolution was mainly directed to not make Israel bear the war's responsibility by emphasizing that the Israeli actions were only a reaction to the Palestinian rockets. On the humanitarian level, Europe diverged from the United States; most of the aid that went to Gaza came from Europe. Most of the Arab pundits agreed also that Hamas was an extension of Hezbollah and of both the Iranian and the Syrian influence in the region; also, they agreed that Israel succeeded in portraying Hamas as the attacker by presenting Israeli children that were scared to death to go to school because of the threat of Hamas's rockets. Therefore, both Europe and the United States converged over the aim of weakening if not eradicating Hamas under the Israeli pretext of its genuine right to defend itself. Israel convinced the transatlantic partners that it could finish Hamas quickly, but this turned out to be a false assumption. Since the war proceeded longer than planned, Israel used its military power excessively which jeopardized the European governments' credibility towards their peoples. Therefore, the resolution 1860, which was initially an Egyptian initiative, was eventually endorsed by both Europe and the United States. This situation was being summarized by D. Mohamed Selim who said that "the transatlantic convergence was not about Gaza, but rather

⁵⁴ El Lawendy, interview, Cairo, July 18, 2010.

about Israel. Neither Europe nor the United States could reject the Israeli decision to strike Hamas because Israel was and still is part and parcel of the western project aiming at empowering Israel throughout the region.”⁵⁵

Yet, other Arab analysts asserted that although the American-European stance on the Gaza war was overtly unified, it covertly encompassed a disagreement over the ends of the resolution 1860. For the United States, the cease-fire happened at a time when Israel had completed its mission to destroy Gaza and eliminate the military power of Hamas. As for Europe, the cease-fire was a necessity deriving from the European popular resentment towards the Israeli atrocities against civilians in Gaza. In the same vein, other pundits emphasized that the Gaza war revealed the western hypocrisy in general and the European hypocrisy in particular. Europe had all the time been speaking about Palestinian rights and human rights; however the Gaza war revealed that Europe abandoned the humanitarian aspect of its policies because the cease-fire was being postponed until Israel had accomplished its mission in Gaza.

In fact, most of the interview partners relied purely on realist premises to explain the transatlantic policies towards Hamas and the Gaza war. The Arab pundits attributed the full transatlantic convergence over isolating Hamas to the traditional western double standard towards Muslims in general and Arabs in particular. The Western alliance had always been in an extended war against Islamic fundamentalism and Hamas represented a pure example for the Jihadist movements in the Middle East. Also, the interview partners saw the transatlantic convergence over isolating Hamas as an alibi to prolong the stalemate in the peace process and to accuse the Palestinians and not Israel of being responsible for the impasse. This Arab perspective partially contradicted with the dissertation findings, particularly concerning the European stance. According to the dissertation findings, Europe has always been enthusiastic to support the peace process and has always urged the Bush administration to aggressively engage in the conflict. It was accurate that Europe followed the American stance regarding the Palestinian-Israeli conflict as an instrument to play a bigger political role in solving the conflict and not to prolong the stalemate, as the interview partners argued.

The dissertation also argues that, unlike the Bush administration, Europe was ready to deal with Hamas if it forfeited violence and recognized Israel. In other words, the Bush administration wanted to change Hamas’ regime, whereas Europe wanted to change its behavior.

⁵⁵ Selim, interview, Cairo, August 16, 2009.

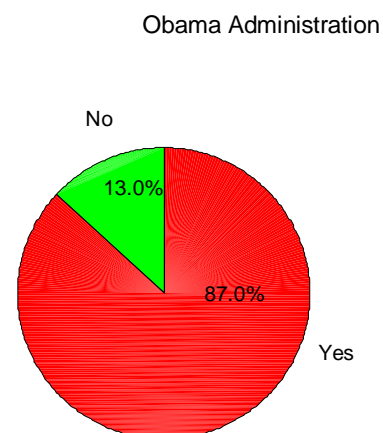
However, at the end of the day the European stance matched the American stance. A large percentage of the interview partners' explanations were consistent with this finding. They asserted that Europe showed some sort of flexibility with Hamas at the outset, but in the end succumbed to American pressure, the political rigidity of Hamas, and the pressure of numerous Arab regimes.

The interview partners also perceived the Gaza war of 2008-2009 as a convenient proof for fully identical transatlantic positions towards the Palestinian-Israeli conflict as a part of empowering Israel and eradicating the Iranian and Syrian sway in the region. It was surprising that the Arab pundits did not perceive that the European stance towards the Gaza war was divided between some European states that supported Israel and others that denounced the attack, as the dissertation findings argued. This can be explained by the fact that the European positions towards Gaza war were altogether ineffective. Therefore, European stances were portrayed in the Arab mind as indistinguishable from the American stances because Europe followed the Bush administration in isolating Hamas and in implementing the West Bank first strategy that principally aimed at toppling the Hamas regime.

▪ The Obama Administration Through Arab Eyes

When asked about the possibility of a more and even a deeper transatlantic convergence over the Middle East with the new administration led by Barak Obama, 87% of the Arab pundits affirmed that a deeper transatlantic convergence would materialize, whereas 13% negated that it would have a tangible effect on the transatlantic relationship.

The opinion of the majority derived from the fact that, unlike his predecessor's, Obama's policies depended heavily on dialogue, diplomacy, openness to the Islamic world in general and partnership and consultation with Europe in particular, and attempting to settle the problems of the Bush administration in the Middle East. Obama's speech at Cairo University was perceived as historic and gave Arabs high expectations of the Obama administration's performance in the Middle East, well-matched with the European stances. In a sense, the new tactics and strategies embraced by the



Obama administration meant giving Europe a bigger role in pursuing the peace process. Europe has always been keening on solving the Palestinian-Israeli conflict; however this European desire had never materialized into decisive stances because Europe never wanted risk a conflict with the United States. Hence, the support of a U.S. administration for the settlement of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict highly served the European interests. This became evident in the visits of Special Envoy George Michael to the Middle East who after each visit consulted directly with the big European member states such as France, Britain, and Germany.

Likewise, the European Union's declarations highly welcomed the Obama administration's positions on the two-state solution and stopping the Israeli settlement. D. Hasan Nafaa signified that by arguing that "Obama adopted a different political discourse than Bush. When Obama talked about a world where the United States does not take decisions unilaterally, he meant consulting with Europe. Therefore, I expect that the transatlantic partners converge in the Obama's era and adopt a division of labor to control the Middle East."⁵⁶

However, a year after Obama took office, most of the pundits agreed that the administration retreated from the objective handling of the Middle East issue and that the president would not be able to implement his promises in the Middle East in general and in Palestine in particular, inspite of his assurance that for the first time solving the Palestinian-Israeli conflict became an American interest. For instance, Nabil Zaky commented that "at the beginning there was an Arabic optimism in the aftermath of the Obama's speech at Cairo University. Nevertheless, we witnessed a retreat from his administration, particularly with respect to the Palestinian issue." Initially, the administration talked about a complete stop to the Israeli settlements; after that. it talked about a temporary freezing of the settlements for 6 or 10 months. Later on, the administration called on the Arabs for more normalizing steps with Israel to build trust and finally it gave up the link between resuming negotiations and the Israeli settlements. As for Iran, the dialogue reached an impasse because Israeli convinced the Obama administration that dialogue with Negad meant stabbing the Iranian reformist powers.⁵⁷

Likewise, D. Mustafa El Feqy contended that "Obama's honeymoon ended because his ability to stop the Israeli settlements and to even close the Guantanamo camp was chiefly

⁵⁶ Nafaa, interview, Cairo, August 30, 2009.

⁵⁷ Zaky, interview, Cairo, August 4, 2009.

debilitated.”⁵⁸ Supporting the same idea, Ambassador Mohamed Basyony asserted that “the first test of Obama was his ability to freeze the Israeli settlements. Despite his initial talk about freezing the Israeli settlements, Obama retreated and started to talk only about restraining settlement.”⁵⁹ Similarly, Adnan Abu Odaa detected Obama’s retreat not only with respect to the Israeli settlements but also with respect to Iran. He argued that the Obama administration not only retreated from calling for a complete freeze of the Israeli settlements to calling a temporary freezing, but also and from a strong commitment to enter a dialogue with Iran to paying more attention to the Iranian opposition instead.⁶⁰

Although most of the Arab pundits confirmed that the American European policies were more convergent in the Obama administration, they also emphasized that the strategic attitudes of the American administration in the Middle East and particularly with respect of the Palestinian issue did not be change. In other words, they argued that although Obama’s policies departed from the provocative policies of the Bush era, no strategic or essential change materialized. Both D. Ahmed Saed Nofaal and D. Mustafa Hamarna criticized the Obama administration severely when they stated that “after one year of his speech at Cairo University, Obama’s words turned out to be nothing but rhetoric.”⁶¹ Likewise, both D. Hisham Ghaseep, professor of political science and president of Princess Sumaya University, and Mohamed Abu Hudeeb argued that when Obama’s administration addressed the Middle East file in practice, it found out that solving the problems was out of their reach. The Obama administration managed to pass the health insurance act in a bargaining process that entailed taking off pressure from Israel with respect to the settlements and the status of Jerusalem.⁶²

On the other hand, 13% of the Arab pundits argued that the Obama Administration would neither positively affect the transatlantic relationship nor the Middle East issues. In other words, they asserted that the Obama administration was nothing but a natural extension of the Bush administration, even if Obama adopted conciliatory tactics with Europe. For example, D. Gehad Odaa contended that by the end of the Bush era, there had been a high transatlantic convergence

⁵⁸ El Feqy, interview, Cairo, September 27, 2009.

⁵⁹ Mohamed Basyony (head of the committee of Foreign Affairs at the Shoura Council and a former Ambassador in Israel), Interview, Cairo, September 29, 2009.

⁶⁰ Abu Odaa, Interview, Amman, January 15, 2010.

⁶¹ Nofaal, interview, Amman, January 20, 2009 and Hamarana, interview, Amman, January 23, 2010.

⁶² Hisham Gaseb, interview, Amman, January 19, 2010. and Abu Hudeeb, interview, Amman, January 20, 2010.

due to the efforts of Rice and that Obama simply lived on this heritage.⁶³ Along with this explanation, both Ambassador Hasan Abu Nehma and D. Ghazi Rababa eloquently argued that the Obama administration was a true continuation of the Bush's administration and that no change ever took place because the war continued in Iraq and got worse in Afghanistan, and the pressures of American institutions (such as Congress) highly constrained Obama's personal desires and capabilities.⁶⁴

A study by D. Adnaan Hayagna that analyzed Obama's speeches found out that there was no big difference between Bush's and Obama's speeches although they differed in the methodology. Obama's methodology is to talk to each country according to what they like to hear; he even talks to the peoples in the language of the idealist school and to the regimes in the language of the realist school. For example, in the Palestinian issue, Obama said to the Arabs what they wanted to hear and in return he pressured them to normalize relations with Israel and make more concessions. As for the Iranian issue, Obama eventually matched Bush's and Rice's policies. Finally, Hayagna concluded that Obama was not the real decision maker within the United States but that the institutions (Congress, National Security Council, etc) controls political power and are in turn controlled by the Israeli lobby.⁶⁵

Although the larger portion of the interview partners argued that transatlantic policies in the Middle East would be more coherent and convergent after Obama took office, most of them expressed a feeling of disappointment towards the Obama administration's performance after one year. This was largely because of the administration's policies towards the Israeli-Palestinian conflict that retreated from taking a solid position towards the Israeli settlements. In fact, the Arab mind judges the performance of any American administration according to its handling of the Palestinian issue. Although the interview partners recognized some positive stances of the Obama administration towards the conflict, such as aggressively engaging in the conflict and recognizing the solution of it as a top priority as well as a national American interest, they also saw the administration's inability to stop the Israeli settlements as a sign for its unwillingness to solve the conflict. Most of the interview partners did not question Obama's genuine personal desire to do so. However, they realized that his administration was constrained, whether by a

⁶³ Odaa, interview, Amman, July 18, 2009.

⁶⁴ Abu Nehma, interview, Amman, January 19, 2010 and Gazi Rababaa (prof of political science- University of Jordan), interview, Amman, January 16, 2010.

⁶⁵ Adanan Hayagnaa, "Obama's Conciliatory Message and the Arab Requests" (Center for the Middle Eastern Studies, the Middle East Monthly Review, Trans), 2010.

stubborn refusal of the Netanyahu government of the peace process or by pressure from Congress.

▪ **Classification of the Arab Visions towards the Transatlantic Relations**

Out of the literature discussed above four central Arab views emerged regarding the nature of the transatlantic relations towards the Middle East:

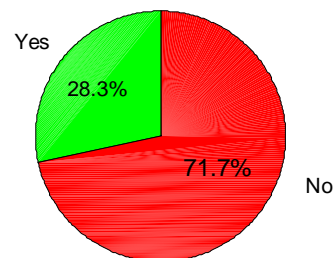
1. A complete transatlantic convergence: This presumes that both the United States and Europe (individually and collectively) have the same goals and objectives in the Middle East and that the only difference is mainly in their style. Therefore, this view expects that the transatlantic relationship is increasingly heading for more cooperation in the Middle East and that what really happens is nothing but some sort of role distribution between the two poles.
2. A European American competition: This assumes that there are genuine divergences and competition between Europe and the United States in the Middle East. Therefore, it expects that the transatlantic policies in the Middle East are conflicting rather than cooperative and that the Arabs can make use of the transatlantic divergences in the region to achieve some political gains.
3. A European American balance of interests: This assumes that the transatlantic relationship is very complex, multi-dimensional, and even encompasses aspects of both cooperation and conflict at the same time.
4. A Divide Europe: This view suggests that there is no unified European stance in the Middle East that could present Europe as a one entity vis a vis the United States. It also notes that what is called 'a unified European stance' is nothing but political statements and announcements that have never been put into practice. Instead, the national political positions of each European state are more significant.⁶⁶

When asked which version they support, the pundits' answers differed significantly; some even picked more than one. To begin with, 28.3 % aligned themselves with the first version (a complete transatlantic convergence).

⁶⁶ Mohamed El Saed Selim, *Evolution of International Politics in the Nineteenth and the Twenties Centuries* (Egypt: Cairo University: Faculty of Economics and Political Science, First Edition, Trans, 2002): 11-23.

Complete transatlantic Convergence

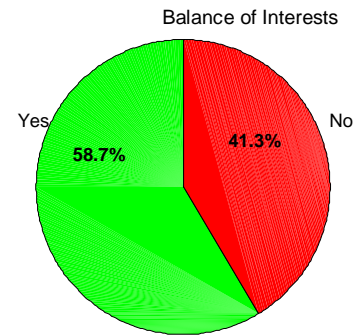
		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	No	33	71.7	71.7	71.7
	Yes	13	28.3	28.3	100.0
	Total	46	100.0	100.0	



The explanations ranged from depicting the transatlantic convergence as based on rules and interest distribution, as D. Saed El Lawendy affirmed, to portraying it as based on the European dependency on and subordination to the United States, as Nabil Zaky acknowledged. In addition, explanations ranged from a complete convergence between two colonial powers in the Middle East except in economic field, as justified by D. Mohamed Selim and D. Hisham Gaseep, to convergence as the ruling attitude albeit with some balance in interests, as D. Hasan Nafaa argued. Moreover, explanations ranged from a complete convergence in confronting the Islamic danger, as depicted by D. Osama El Gazaly Harb, over convergence over the petroleum reserves, as Ambassador Mohamed Basyony contended, to convergence over protecting Israel's security and preponderance in the Middle East. This view of the interview partners focused on the broader, common, and strategic transatlantic interests in the Middle East, Israel's security and supremacy, petroleum influx, and countering Islamic fundamentalism. In addition, they referred to the long transatlantic historical legacy in the region that has always tended to divide the region among the colonial powers in secret treaties. However, the interview partners did not proclaim that transatlantic policies were entirely identical. Rather, they saw divergences over the tools of actions. Therefore, the interview partners in this vision argued that the Arab mind should not count on the transatlantic divergences over any issue in Middle East because Arabs cannot utilize the contradictions between Europe and the United States to gain any political advantages.

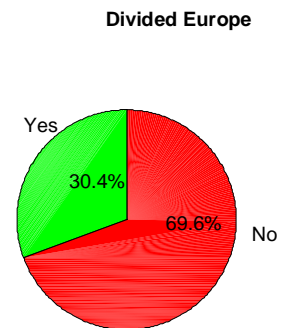
Those who supported the second view (European American competition) only constituted 2.2% of the sample and they primarily concentrated on the transatlantic economic competition while acknowledging that the guiding rule is cooperation. This view is principally based on an assumption that both Europe and the United States attempt to increase their influence and achieve market penetration; therefore economic contradictions and sometime struggles emerge between them.

Meanwhile, the third view (European American balance of interests) attained the largest support from the Arab pundits 58.7%. Most of the pundits who picked this view explained their choice by arguing that it encompassed aspects of cooperation and competition simultaneously. In other words, while they denote transatlantic convergence over the grand strategic objectives in the Middle East, they also see some divergences. Nevertheless, at the end of the day, the transatlantic convergence over the grand strategies and objectives in the Middle East pushes Europe, as the weaker partner, to adapt its policies to those of the United States, even if they diverged initially. Hence, the general framework is the alliance and within that alliance divergences over priorities and economic interests might emerge; however, in next to no time they fade away or are settled later.



The interview partners in this view illuminated that it was not about a balance between equals, but rather a balance of interests. They also asserted that even though there might be some transatlantic divergences, usually not over strategic goals, they would soon vanish because Europe usually adjusts its positions within the alliance framework. In fact, this view is highly consistent with the dissertation findings which argued that there were transatlantic convergences and divergences in each case study; however these convergences and divergences varied according to each case study and were never over the strategic goals but only over the appropriate tools.

Unsurprisingly, the fourth view (“divided Europe”) also attained large Arab support, 30.4%. However, this vision was not chosen individually but in conjunction with the first and the third vision. The pundits explained this by contending that Europe always attempted to balance its interests with the United States in the Middle East; however, its division and the rise of European nationalist interests always hinder Europe. Therefore, Europe at the end of the day copes with the United States, whether in a form of subordination or a form of role distribution and often accepts the marginal and a secondary role designated by the United States. This view is also consistent with the dissertation findings because the lack of a European



common foreign policy was seen as decisive in all explanations of the ineffectiveness of the European Union in the three case studies.

In conclusion, transatlantic policies never formed one pattern; they differed from case to case, from level to level. Therefore, there were four different Arab views of the transatlantic policies in the Middle East; also, each group of pundits perceived these policies from a different angle. Nevertheless, all four views claimed that there was a widespread transatlantic convergence over the strategic interests in the Middle East that surpassed marginal divergences. Even if there were some economic or even political divergences between Europe and the United States, they were generally overcome for different reasons. These reasons revolved around a divided and even subordinated Europe to the United States, the role distribution between allies, or even a balance of interests where each side makes concessions in order to reach middle ground anchored in their relative power.

▪ **Egyptian and Jordanian Perceptions: A Comparative Analysis**

An analysis of the interviews based on nationality shows that there are certain differences and similarities between Egyptian and Jordanian perceptions toward the transatlantic policies in the Middle East. Egyptian and Jordanian pundits were almost identical in their perception of the broad spectrum of the Bush administration's policies in the Middle East which they evaluated as extremely negative. With regard to the European policies in the region, Egyptian and Jordanian pundits entirely agreed on the subordinated nature of the European policies. However, a small percentage of Egyptian pundits witnessed some marginal positive European positions, albeit with no genuine effect on the ground. This can be explained by the fact that this small portion of the Egyptian interview partners perceived the European declarations, announcements, and statements towards the peace process as more balanced, positive, and flexible than the Jordanian interview partners did. Nevertheless, both nationalities acknowledged that European policies were generally ineffective on the real ground.

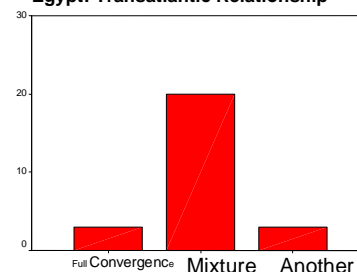
As for the relationship between the American and the European policies in the Middle East, Jordanian pundits tended more towards the full transatlantic convergence: 25% compared to 11.5% of Egyptian pundits. 76.9% of Egyptian versus 50% Jordanian pundits viewed the transatlantic relationship as a mixture between convergence and divergence, whereas quarter of Jordanian versus 11.5% of Egyptian pundits perceived the relationship as a third, mainly defining it a European subordination. Accordingly, Jordanians gave more emphasis to the

dependent nature of the European Union and claimed a more transatlantic convergence in the Middle East. Egyptians, on the other hand, focused on the mixture of transatlantic convergence and divergence and paid lesser attention to the subordinated nature of the European Union. This can be partly explained by the fact that most of the Jordanian interview partners, unlike a small percentage of the Egyptian interview partners, did not count on the lofty EU declaratory policies and instead reckoned principally with its real policies. Nevertheless, both Egyptian and Jordanian pundits gave a higher percentage to the mixed transatlantic convergence and divergence in the Middle East, as illustrated in the following tables and diagrams:

Egyptians: Transatlantic Relationship

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Full Convergence	3	11.5	11.5	11.5
Mixture	20	76.9	76.9	88.5
Another	3	11.5	11.5	100.0
Total	26	100.0	100.0	

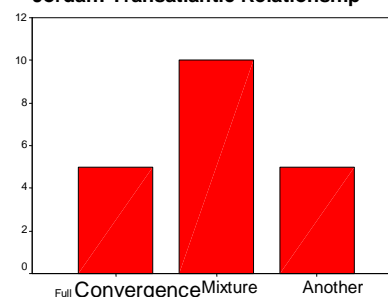
Egypt: Transatlantic Relationship



Jordanians: Transatlantic Relationship

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Full Convergence	5	25.0	25.0	25.0
Mixture	10	50.0	50.0	75.0
Another	5	25.0	25.0	100.0
Total	20	100.0	100.0	

Jordan: Transatlantic Relationship

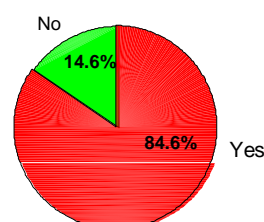


Asked about Middle East politics during the two terms of the Bush administration, 84.6% of the Egyptian pundits argued that a change took place in the second term with respect to the European Union, whereas only 50% of Jordanian pundits accepted this argument. Therefore, it can be argued that the Egyptians perceived a noticeable change in Bush's policies in his second term more than the Jordanians did.

Egypt: Bush's Change and Continuity

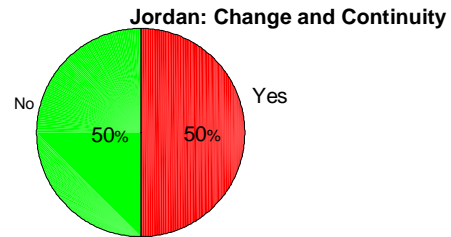
	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Yes	22	84.6	84.6	84.6
No	4	15.4	15.4	100.0
Total	26	100.0	100.0	

Egypt: Bush's Change and Continuity



Jordan: Bush's Change and Continuity

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Yes	10	50.0	50.0	50.0
	No	10	50.0	50.0	100.0
	Total	20	100.0	100.0	

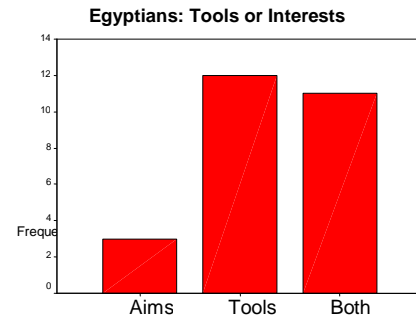


These tables and diagrams can be explained by the fact that most of the Jordanian interview partners perceived no real change in Bush's second term because they were principally referring to its policies with respect to the Palestinian-Israeli conflict. The Egyptian interview partners, on the other hand, perceived more change in Bush's second administration because they focused more on the Iraq and the Iranian cases than the Palestinian-Israeli conflict. Nevertheless, both the Egyptian and the Jordanian pundits attributed this change not to a change in Bush's ideologies and strategies, but rather to the American military quagmires in both Iraq and Afghanistan. These quagmires forced the second Bush administration to rhetorically engage in the Palestinian-Israeli conflict and to rely more on diplomacy in the Iranian nuclear crisis while substantially relinquishing its strategic aims and interests.

Regarding the dichotomy of tools or aims and interests, 46.2% of the Egyptian versus 55% of the Jordanian pundits argued that transatlantic divergences over the Middle East were genuinely over the tools. Meanwhile, an almost equal percentage of the Egyptian (42.3%) and the Jordanian (45%) pundits argued that the transatlantic divergences were over both tools and aims and interests. Nevertheless, in their explanations, both Egyptians and Jordanians contended that transatlantic divergences over aims and interests were always temporary, superficial, and tended to evaporate, and that the basic transatlantic interests in the Middle East were unquestionably identical, albeit with different priorities and different degrees of urgency. 11.5 % of the Egyptians interviewed saw the transatlantic divergences over the policies aims in the Middle East, while none of the Jordanians did. However, that percentage of the Egyptian experts explained that fact mainly with the economic competition between Europe and the United States over the Middle East market. The following diagrams and charts illustrate these percentages:

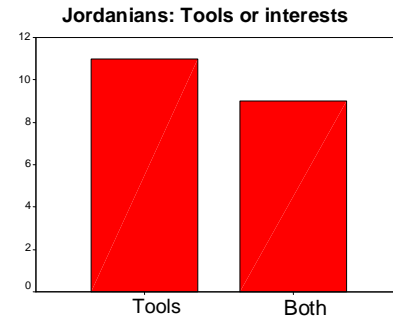
Egyptians: Tools or Interests

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Aims	3	11.5	11.5	11.5
Tools	12	46.2	46.2	57.7
Both	11	42.3	42.3	100.0
Total	26	100.0	100.0	



Jordanians: Tools or Interests

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Tools	11	55.0	55.0	55.0
Both	9	45.0	45.0	100.0
Total	20	100.0	100.0	

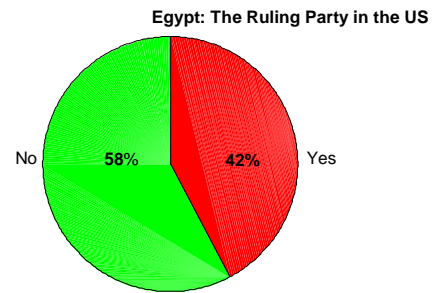


Therefore, it can be concluded that there was an Egyptian-Jordanian consensus over the fact that transatlantic divergences over aims were never about their strategic aims in the Middle East, but rather about their dissimilar priorities and level of urgency. The Egyptian interview partners focused on the transatlantic economic competition more than the Jordanian interview partners did. Therefore, there were differences between the Jordanian and the Egyptian interview partners over the aims category.

Asked about the effect of the ruling party in the United States on the administration's policies with respect to the Middle East, Egyptian pundits were relatively more positive. In a sense, 42% of Egyptians versus 30% of Jordanians affirmed this effect, whereas the majority of each group argued that the changing of the ruling party within the United States has no effect on its policies vis-à-vis the Middle East, albeit more Jordanian pundits (70%) held this opinion compared to their Egyptian colleagues (58%). Nevertheless, both Jordanian and Egyptian pundits agreed that the effect of the change of the ruling party in the United States on the Middle East is mainly confined to a change in techniques, but never in the strategic orientations. This is illustrated in the following diagrams and tables:

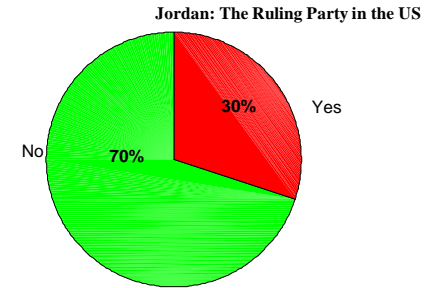
Egypt: The Ruling Party in the US

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Yes	11	42.3	42.3	42.3
	No	15	57.7	57.7	100.0
	Total	26	100.0	100.0	



Jordan: The Ruling Party in the US

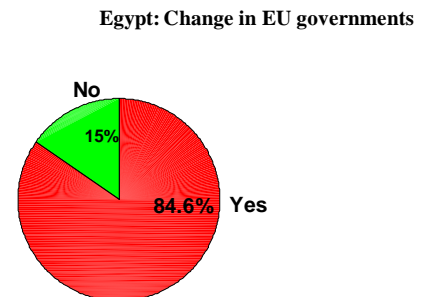
		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Yes	6	30.0	30.0	30.0
	No	14	70.0	70.0	100.0
	Total	20	100.0	100.0	



As for the effect of a change in European governments on their policies with respect of the Middle East, all Jordanian and 84.6% of Egyptian pundits affirmed this. However, both groups also stated that this effect was mainly regarding the Iraq issue and that a change in EU governments generally had no effect on their policies towards the Palestinian-Israeli conflict, since the Europeans were marginalized in this conflict by both the U.S. and Israel. Concerning the 15% of the Egyptian experts who argued that a change in European governments had no effect on their policies in the Middle East, these were mainly three experts who contended that the effect was noticeably limited because the European states do not easily change their strategic orientations. However, they also argued that the effect of the change in the European governments was noticed mainly in Iraq and largely due to public opinion.

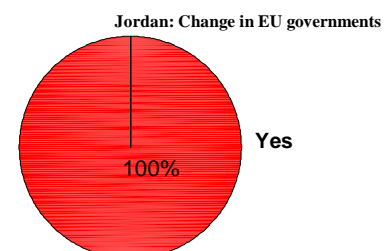
Egypt: Change in EU governments

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Yes	22	84.6	84.6	84.6
	No	4	15.4	15.4	100.0
	Total	26	100.0	100.0	



Jordan: Change in EU governments

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Yes	20	100.0	100.0	100.0



As for the Israeli-Palestinian conflict in particular, 46.2% of Egyptian and 55% of Jordanian pundits claimed that the transatlantic policies were mainly in full convergence. However, 30% of the Jordanians perceived this as relationship in which Europe was subordinated to the U.S. compared to 19.2% of the Egyptians who held that view. Therefore, both groups were more prone to perceive the transatlantic policies towards the Israeli-Palestinian conflict as in full convergence, albeit with a hegemonic role of the United States and a follower role of the European Union. The following diagrams and tables illustrate these percentages.

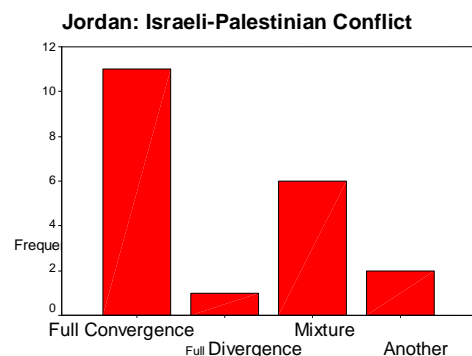
Egypt: Palestinian-Israeli Conflict

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid Full Convergence	12	46.2	46.2	46.2
Mixture	9	34.6	34.6	80.8
Another	5	19.2	19.2	100.0
Total	26	100.0	100.0	



Jordan: Palestinian-Israeli Conflict

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid Full Convergence	11	55.0	55.0	55.0
Full Divergence	1	5.0	5.0	60.0
Mixture	6	30.0	30.0	90.0
Another	2	10.0	10.0	100.0
Total	20	100.0	100.0	

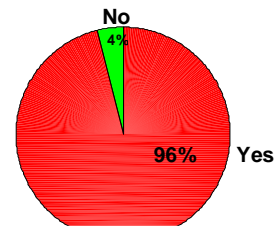


Regarding the effect of the Obama administration on the state of the transatlantic relationship, Egyptian pundits were more optimistic than their Jordanian counterparts. 96.2% of the Egyptians compared to 75% of Jordanians argued that they expect more transatlantic convergence over Middle East issues. Both nationalities attributed this to the new strategic orientations that the Obama administration embraced during his electoral campaign and his first year at the White House. These percentages are illustrated in the following diagrams and tables:

Egypt: Obama Administration

Egypt: Obama Administration and Transatlantic Relationship

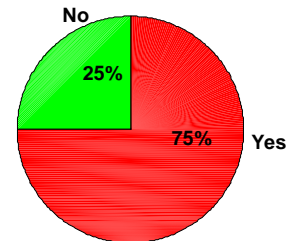
		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Yes	25	96.2	96.2	96.2
	No	1	3.8	3.8	100.0
	Total	26	100.0	100.0	



Jordan: Obama Administration

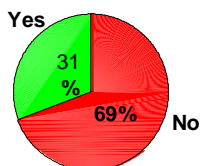
Jordan: Obama Administration and Transatlantic Relationship

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Yes	15	75.0	75.0	75.0
	No	5	25.0	25.0	100.0
	Total	20	100.0	100.0	

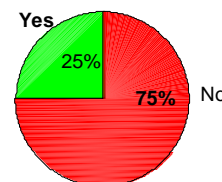


Regarding the classification of the nature of the transatlantic policies towards the Middle East, a similar percentage of Egyptian and Jordanian pundits subscribed to the first view (“full transatlantic convergence”). In a sense, 30% of Egyptians versus 25% of Jordanians perceived the transatlantic policies in the Middle East as in full convergence. This is illustrated in the following diagrams:

Egypt: Full Transatlantic Convergence

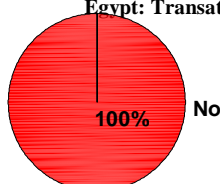


Jordan: Full Transatlantic Convergence

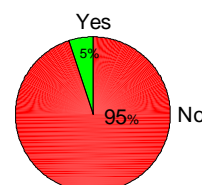


As for the second view (“transatlantic competition”), only 5% of Jordanian pundits viewed the transatlantic policies in competition but mainly confined it to economic competition and not on their political goals in the Middle East, whereas no one Egyptian pundit perceived the transatlantic policies in the Middle East in competition:

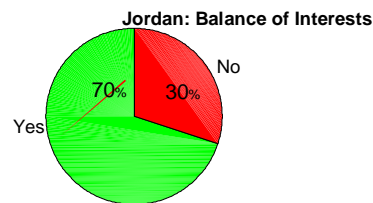
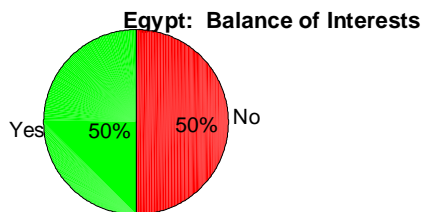
Egypt: Transatlantic Competition



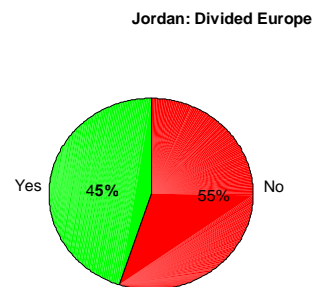
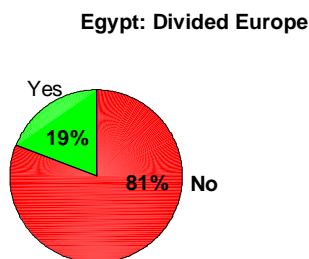
Jordan: Transatlantic Competition



The third view (“balance of interests”) had had the most support in both groups: 50% of the Egyptian pundits versus 70% of the Jordanians pundits confirmed that both Europe and the United States have balanced interests and that they simultaneously compete and cooperate with respect to the Middle East issues:



Concerning the fourth view (“divided Europe”), 45% of the Jordanian pundits versus 19.2% of the Egyptian pundits claimed that Europe is a divided continent and therefore not on an equal footing with the United States with respect to the Middle East. Lastly, 19.2% of the Egyptian pundits versus no of the Jordanian pundits argued that the relationship is characterized by a complete European subordination to the American dictates in the Middle East:



In fact, this comparison between the Egyptian and the Jordanian interview partners revealed that the four traditional views towards the transatlantic policies had their proponents in each country, albeit with different degrees. This can be partly explained by the multifaceted and multilayered nature of the transatlantic policies in Middle East that are sometimes conflicting and convergent and divergent by differing degrees from case to case. Besides, because Europe did not have a common foreign policy, some Arab pundits perceived its policies in the Middle East as ineffective and sometimes even subordinated to that of the United States. In conclusion, both the Jordanian and the Egyptian experts chose the “balance of interests” as the common model of the state of the transatlantic policies in the Middle East. Nevertheless, the other visions still have a certain popularity and rationale in the Arab perception.

Conclusion:

The 46 personal interviews conducted with four groups of experts - academics, politicians, journalists, and diplomats - in both Egypt and Jordan about their view of the transatlantic policies towards the Middle East, yielded the following results: The Arab pundits attributed the main reasons behind the transatlantic rift between the United States and some European states – France and Germany in particular - over the American decision to invade Iraq to both political and economic reasons. The political reasons ranged from Europe's fears of the United States' tight control over political decisions and the economic resources and markets in the Middle East and a split over the best methodology to address Iraq to the fact that the European intelligence agencies were certain that the American accusations against the Iraqi regime of possessing weapons of mass destruction were false. The economic reasons for the transatlantic split over Iraq revolved mainly around the French-German petroleum interests.

As for the reasons of the split within Europe over the Iraq, the pundits attributed the reasons of the proponents to the desire of the central and the Eastern European states along with Italy, Britain, Spain, and the Netherlands to attain a part of the Iraqi the reconstruction and the petroleum contracts as well as their desire to maximize their influence in Europe and globally. The alignment of the new European states with the United States was explained with the interests of these states to distance themselves from Russia which by default meant getting closer to the United States and to the NATO. In other words, the new European states' stance in Iraq was the price they needed to pay to prove their loyalty to the United States in order not to bear the costs of any American-Russian rapprochement in the future.

However, when asked about the reasons for the transatlantic convergence in the aftermath of the American war in Iraq, the pundits' answers revolved mainly around one fact: The transatlantic rapprochement – in Bush's second term - was to realign an American desire to restore European political, financial, and militant support in Iraq and a European desire to attain a part of the economic cake in Iraq and to heal the rifts with the United States as a strategic and an indispensable ally in the Middle East. At the end of the day, most of the Arab pundits agreed that the American-European differences over Iraq were mainly over the appropriate tools and methods rather than the main strategic goals. They agreed almost unanimously that the European convergence with the United States in the aftermath of the war was mainly economically

motivated while the American convergence with Europe after the war was mainly politically motivated.

From a theoretical perspective, the most interview partners relied primarily on realistic explanations for the transatlantic fissure over the Iraq war in 2003; some relied on liberalist explanations. Realist explanations claimed that Europe was alarmed over further American dominance that would seriously impede its economic interests in Middle East and also concerned about a new equilibrium of influence on the continent. Also, European intelligence agencies did not buy the Bush administration's accusations against Iraq. Europe also feared that a conquered Iraq would turn stability in the Middle East upside down and that Europe would be the biggest loser owing to its geographical proximity to the region. Nonetheless, the interview partners paid more attention to the economic interests of core Europe as a motivating reason behind their rejection of the Iraq war and also referred to the chronological split within the European continent between Atlanticism and Europeanism. Most of these explanations were compatible with the dissertation's findings. Nonetheless, the dissertation's findings were more wide-ranging and distinguished between the EU-US level and the US-EU member states level to signify that each European big member state had its own reasons for supporting or rejecting the war, which went beyond economic reasons.

From a liberal perspective, the interview partners argued to some extent that the Bush administration resorted to unilateralism whereas core Europe championed multilateralism. Nevertheless, they gave no interpretation of this transatlantic divergence. The dissertation's findings argued that there was a value gap between core Europe and the Bush administration concerning the international system and international institutions owing to the neo-cons' control over the first Bush first administration. Also, the dissertation's findings referred to another domestic reason for the French and German refusal to the war. Unlike the dissertation's findings, constructivist explanations were not referred to by the interview partners. This was partially because the Arab pundits perceived the transatlantic values as common, identical, and taken for granted.

As for the Iranian nuclear crisis, most of the Arab pundits agreed that the American European policies highly converged over the necessity of preventing Iran from being a nuclear power; albeit they differed over the appropriate tools to address the Iranian crisis. Contrasting with the dissertation's findings, the interview partners did not recognize that there was a crucial

transatlantic divergence over tools concerning the Iranian quandary from 2002 until 2005. In accordance with the dissertation, the EU turned down numerous American proposals until the end of 2005 to send the Iranian case to the Security Council as a lead up to sanctions against and ultimately a military attack against Iran. Even though the interview partners upheld that there was a transatlantic divergence over the proper tools regarding Iran, they also asserted that this divergence was simply a case of role distribution and that the US told Europe to negotiate with Iran. Unlike the dissertation's findings, the interview partners did not differentiate between the diverse transatlantic perceptions of the Iranian regime as an impetus for transatlantic divergence over the appropriate tools. For instance, the Bush administration held a strategic nuclear accord with India in 2005, at the climax of the Iranian crisis, and perceived India as an accountable state while the Iranian regime was denounced as rogue and evil.

Being asked about the rationales for transatlantic convergence over Iran's nuclear dilemma, the interview partners relied on realist premises, focused principally on the significance of the Israeli factor and the fact that the Western alliance was unified over bringing down any regional power that might adjust the strategic balance in the Middle East against Western interests. The dissertation's findings, on the other hand, mentioned other reasons: the decline of American military and soft power, the mounting costs and dangers of a potential armed attack on Iran, the augmentation of a more confident and defiant Iran, and the amplification of the American predicaments in Iraq and Afghanistan. The interview partners' attentiveness to the Israeli component and the Western craving to impede the materialization of any regional power, such Iran, was derived for the most part from their historical experience with the West.

Furthermore, the interview partners did not utilize any liberal explanations for the transatlantic convergence over Iran. Conversely, the dissertation's findings referred to the change of the hawks in the second Bush administration into more pragmatic members of the administration as an important reason to be reckoned with. It also referred to the decline of Bush's popularity in the United States and the change in several European governments that sustained a bigger transatlantic convergence over Iran.

As for the nature of the relationship between the American and the European policies with regard to the Palestinian-Israeli conflict, the statistical analysis showed that half of the pundits saw in full convergence, one-third as a mixture between convergence and divergence, and 15.2% chose another answer (European subordination to the United States); and merely

2.2% saw the relationship in full divergence. Notwithstanding these four groups of interview partners, their realist explanations were in harmony with the dissertation's finding that the United States controlled the wheel and Europe followed concerning the Palestinian-Israeli conflict, even though they had diverging rationales. Most of the interview partners in the first three groups maintained that Europe was an economic colossus but a political dwarf principally in regard to the Palestinian-Israeli conflict. They also emphasized that Israel's security was a continuous strategic transatlantic point of convergence. Nonetheless, the majority of the interview partners differentiated between the constructive declaratory policies of the EU towards the Palestinian-Israeli conflict and its results on the ground, which were judged as dreadfully modest. In other words, the majority of the interview partners maintained that Europe demonstrated more consideration, more readiness to pay attention to the Arab claims, and slighter support to Israel compared to the United States, as well as more suppleness and awareness of the conflict realities. Nonetheless, they simultaneously emphasized that Europe was unproductive, subordinated, and sometimes harmonizing with the American postures.

At odds with the dissertation findings, which maintained that Europe has always suffered from the Israeli and the American reluctance to be given a real responsibility in the conflict, most of the interview partners upheld that Europe took the United States as an pretext for not taking a solid position and that it only played a complementary and even an alleviating aspect to the American policies in the conflict. Nevertheless, the general trend of the interviews was that the United States and Europe are much closer to convergence than divergence. In addition, the Arab pundits contended that the European American convergence and the European subordination to the United States were more evident in the Palestinian-Israeli issue than any other issue in the Middle East. This was mainly attributed to the effect of the unifying Israeli factor on both the United States and Europe. In a sense, both the United States and Europe agree on protecting Israel's existence and security, albeit with different tools. Simultaneously, the interview partners hold that the Israelis pressure already exists on both the United States and Europe, albeit to different degrees and with different tools. In other words, the powerful Israeli lobby in the United States plays a bigger role in pressuring the United States; the Holocaust industry along with accusations of anti-Semitism are used against any European state that tends to take a more balanced stance with respect to the Palestinian-Israeli conflict.

The pundits' answers on the American-European stances on the democratically elected Hamas government and the 2008-2009 Gaza war illustrate the Arabic view on the American-European positions they consider almost identical. Depending chiefly on realist assumptions, most of the interview partners recognized the full transatlantic convergence over isolating Hamas as a sort of conventional Western double standard towards Muslims in general and Arabs in particular. In other words, they maintained that the West has always been in a general war against Islamic fundamentalism and considered Hamas a model for Jihadist movements that opposed Western interests in the Middle East. In addition, the interview partners attributed the transatlantic convergence over isolating Hamas to a common desire to utilize it as an excuse to prolong the deadlock in the peace process and to blame the Palestinians and not Israel for being responsible for the standoff. This Arabic understanding partially disagreed with the dissertation findings, principally about the European stance. Supporting the dissertation findings, the pundits maintained that Europe has always been enthusiastic to resolve the peace process and has always urged the Bush administration to aggressively engage in the conflict. It was true that Europe followed the American stance regarding the Palestinian-Israeli conflict as a tool to gain a larger political role in the conflict and not to extend the impasse, as the interview partners argued.

Unlike the Bush administration, the dissertation findings maintained that Europe was willing to address Hamas if it swore off violence and recognized Israel. In other words, while the Bush administration worked to topple the Hamas regime, Europe sought to modify its behavior. Nevertheless, at the end of the day Europe matched the American stance. A large percentage of the interview partners' explanations were in harmony with this finding. They agreed that Europe showed some sort of flexibility with Hamas in the beginning, but later matched the stance of the Bush administration under American pressure, Hamas' political inflexibility, and the pressure of numerous Arab regimes. The interview partners also perceived the Gaza war of 2008-2009 as good evidence for fully convergent and indistinguishable transatlantic positions towards the Palestinian-Israeli conflict, as well as a sign of supporting Israel's superiority and eliminating Iranian and Syrian influence in the region. It was astonishing that the interview partners did not recognize that the European posture towards Gaza war was not unanimous: Some European states supported Israel and others condemned the assault, as the dissertation findings maintained. However, the interview partners' explanations can be attributed to the fact that the European positions towards Gaza war were ultimately useless. Therefore, European stances were depicted

by the interview partners as identical to the American stances because Europe tagged along with the Bush administration in isolating Hamas and in employing the West Bank first strategy designed primarily to overthrow the Hamas regime.

With the election of a new American president, 87% of the Arab pundits contended that American-European relations would become more cooperative and solid than before, whereas 13% saw no possible effect on the transatlantic relations. Despite optimism towards the Obama administration at the beginning of his term, most of the Arab pundits expressed their despair about Obama's performance in the Middle East by the end of his first year in office. In other words, most of the Arab pundits argued that Obama retreated from addressing the Middle East issues objectively and that he would not be able to achieve what he promised in the Middle East in general and in the Palestinian-Israeli conflict in particular. Most of the Arab pundits underscored their doubts by referring to Obama's stance on the Israeli settlement activities, which changed from a complete stop to an interim suspension to refuting a linkage between the resumption of negotiations and the Israeli settlement activities, as Israel had always desired. This can be explained by the fact that the interview partners judged the acts of the American administrations, positively or negatively, in view of their management to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. The interview partners praised the rhetoric positions of the Obama administration regarding the conflict, such as assertively engaging in the conflict and making its resolution a top priority. Nevertheless, they also criticized the administration's failure to end the Israeli settlements. Most of the interview partners did not doubt Obama's personal yearning to resolve the conflict. However, they realized that his administration was restricted whether by a Netanyahu government opposed to the peace process or by pressure of Congress.

Out of four traditional Arab views of the nature of transatlantic policies in the Middle East, the majority of the Arab pundits, 58.7 %, chose the third version (balance of interests); 30.5 chose the fourth version ("divided Europe") and 28.3 % the first version ("full transatlantic convergence"); the second version ("competition") was only picked by 2.2%, meaning mainly economic competition. In the first view (full transatlantic convergence), the interview partners considered the strategic transatlantic interests in the Middle East; Israel's protection and preeminence, fuel reserves, and the fight against Islamic fundamentalism. In addition, the Arab mind invoked the legacy of the colonial transatlantic policies that had constantly partitioned the region among each other in clandestine agreements. Nevertheless, the interview partners refuted

that transatlantic policies were totally alike. Rather, they contended that there were transatlantic divergences over the tools of actions. In the second view (transatlantic competition), a small portion of the interview partners presumed that both Europe and the United States compete to amplify their influence in the Middle East markets. As a result, economic competition and sometime struggle materialize between the allies.

In the third view (balance of interests), the larger portion of the interview partners maintained that this was not about a balance between equals, but rather a balance of interests. They also contended that transatlantic divergences, usually not over strategic goals, rapidly evaporated because Europe, as a weaker and not unified partner, habitually adjusted its positions to those of the United States. This vision greatly harmonizes with the dissertation findings which maintained that there were transatlantic convergences and divergences in each case study; however they varied according to each case study and were never over the strategic goals but merely over the appropriate tools. In the fourth view (a divided Europe); the interview partners' conclusion was compatible with the dissertation findings. The ineffectiveness of the real European policies in the three case studies was largely attributed to the lack of a common European foreign policy.

In conclusion, the general Arab trend saw the transatlantic relations in the Middle East tending more towards a balance of interests in the context of the transatlantic strategic alliance and partnership. Also, Europe is divided continent when it comes to a common foreign and security policy, which means that Europe is to follow the American leadership in the Middle East even if the transatlantic partners diverged over the best tactics, tools, and courses of action. There were four diverse Arab perceptions to transatlantic policies in the Middle East, because transatlantic policies never had a single prototype; they differed from case to case, from level to level. Nonetheless, all four views maintained that there was a general transatlantic convergence over strategic interests in the Middle East that went beyond secondary divergences. Even if there were some economic or even political divergences between Europe and the United States they were generally overcome for diverse reasons. These reasons revolved around a divided and even subordinated Europe, a model of role distribution between the allies, or even a sort of balance of interests where each make compromises with the intention of reaching middle a ground founded on their relative power.

Finally, a comparison between the Jordanian and the Egyptian experts showed that there was a complete unanimity in their overall negative perception of the Bush administration's policies in the Middle East. Both Jordanian and Egyptian experts denounced the subordinated role of the European Union to the United States, albeit a small percentage of the Egyptians were still counting on an effective and positive role of the European Union in the Middle East. Unlike all of the Jordanian and most of the Egyptian interview partners, this small portion counted more on the EU declarations, announcements, and statements that were more positive towards Arab rights. Notwithstanding both nationalities acknowledged that European policies were by and large unproductive on the real ground.

In addition, both the Jordanian and the Egyptian experts gave a different emphasis to the relationship between Europe and the United States in the Middle East; however, most of them saw a mix of transatlantic convergence and divergence in the Middle East. Unlike the Egyptian pundits, the Jordanian interview partners stressed the subordinated nature of the European Union because they did not give as much attention to the EU declaratory policies as the Egyptians did.

The Egyptian experts perceived a manifest change in Bush's policies in his second term more than the Jordanians did. This is attributed to the fact that most of the Egyptian interview partners concentrated on the changed Bush administration's policies towards Iraq and Iran than its rigid policies towards the Palestinian question, whereas most of the Jordanian interview partners focused more on the Palestinian-Israeli conflict. Notwithstanding, both groups argued that Bush's ideologies and strategies remained the same, and that any change was merely technical, deriving from the American military crises in both Iraq and Afghanistan. These crises were the chief driving force behind Bush second administration's rhetorical engagement in the Palestinian-Israeli conflict and its utilization of diplomacy in the Iranian dilemma, without abandoning its strategic aims and interests.

Although both Egyptian and Jordanian experts put a different weight on the aims-tools dichotomy, both groups agreed that the transatlantic divergences over aims and interests were always momentary, on the surface, and vanished swiftly, and both confirmed that the crucial transatlantic interests in the Middle East were indisputably alike. Nevertheless, a small percentage of the Egyptian experts argued that the transatlantic aims and interests in the Middle East sometimes contradicted each other, but mainly over the respective economic share in the

Middle East markets. This is why there were differences between the Jordanian and the Egyptian interview partners over the aims category.

Both the Jordanian and the Egyptian pundits argued that a change of the ruling party in the United States affects only the techniques of its Middle Eastern policies rather than it's the strategic orientations. Both groups perceived the transatlantic partners largely in full convergence in the Israeli-Palestinian conflict; the Jordanians saw a full convergence and with a leading role of the United States and a complementary or subordinated role of Europe. The Obama administration was received positively by both the Egyptian and the Jordanian experts in its effect on the transatlantic relationship. However, both groups had their reservations over the Obama administration's performance with regard to the Palestinian-Israeli conflict.

Finally, both the Jordanian and the Egyptian experts chose the "balance of interests" version as the model for the state of transatlantic policies in the Middle East. The comparison of the stances of the Egyptian and the Jordanian interview partners disclosed that the four Arab views of transatlantic policies were advocated in each country, albeit on diverse levels. This is because the multifaceted and multilayered nature of transatlantic policies is well-known in the Middle East, as well as the fact that they are occasionally divergent (i.e. in economics) and sometimes cooperating and conflicting by differing degrees from case to case. In addition, most of the interview partners, whether Egyptians or Jordanians, perceived Europe as divided over its foreign policy. Therefore, most of them portrayed the European Union as unproductive and even sometimes subordinated to the United States' dictates in Middle East.

Conclusion

The dissertation's primary question was why European and American policies converge and diverge towards Middle East issues despite their agreement on common goals. This question was divided into a set of sub-questions regarding the transatlantic strategies and priorities in the Middle East and the transatlantic convergences and divergences over three case studies: Iraq, Iran, and the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. The third set of sub-questions looked at the Arab perspective towards the transatlantic policies in the Middle East. The dissertation adopted two main arguments: The first was that transatlantic differences concerning the Middle East are mainly in details (tools), but not in the essence of their policies. The second was that the transatlantic allies' convergences regarding the Middle East make their policies more coherent. Functionally, the dissertation was divided into two parts. The first covered the transatlantic theoretical frameworks, the transatlantic strategies and priorities in Middle East, and the three case studies (Iraq War, Iranian nuclear crisis, and the Palestinian-Israeli conflict). The findings of this part are as follows:

Methodologically, the dissertation embraced a multi-dimensional theoretical approach that combined neo-realistic, neo-liberalist, and constructivist explanations of transatlantic policies in the Middle East. The neo-realistic approach dwelled on the distribution of power and the threat perception, the neo-liberalist approach paid attention to values and domestic factors, whereas the constructivist approach relied more on abstract factors - images, strategic identities, and cultures to elucidate transatlantic convergences and divergences with respect to the Middle East.

Derived from those theoretical perspectives, the study carried out a comparison of transatlantic strategies and priorities in the Middle East. Historically, the Middle East been -and still is - a chief cause of transatlantic contention. Ever since the end of the World War II, a pattern of distribution of power in the Middle East materialized; the United States took the political helm over the region whereas Europe - divided between Atlanticism and Europeanism- tried to gain political influence by using its colossal economic power. Therefore, history implied that there was transatlantic strategic thinking with regard to the Middle East manifested itself in different ways. However, a comparison between the New American Security Strategy (NSS) 2002 and the European Security Strategy (ESS) 2003 demonstrated that the transatlantic allies strategically converged over the general objectives, aims, and interests in the Middle East but

diverged over threat perceptions, priorities, and tools of action. In a sense, both the United States and Europe embraced the same sources of threat such as terrorism, proliferation of weapons of mass destruction, rogue and failed states, and certain regional conflicts. In addition, both Europe and the United States had the same interests in facing those threats in the Middle East besides solving the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, ensuring Israeli safety, securing oil supplies as well as more general economic interests. However, those threats were perceived differently on each side of the Atlantic. While the NSS argued that the lack of democracy in the Middle East was a fertile soil for terrorism, the ESS contended that terrorism stemmed also from within Europe and from unsolved regional conflicts in the Middle East such as the Palestinian-Israeli conflict. While the NSS perceived a stop to the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction as an ingredient of its strategy against terrorism and linked them to the intentions of rogue states, the ESS addressed proliferation separately and linked it to global control regimes and unresolved conflicts. While the NSS adopted the concept of the rogue state and linked it to terrorism, the ESS embraced the failed state concept and linked it to bad governance and corruption.

Based on this divergent threat perception, transatlantic priorities also diverged more generally over Middle East issues. The Bush administration paid no attention to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict and concentrated instead on the democratization of Palestine based on the insight that the Israeli-Palestinian conflict is a struggle between a democratic state (Israel) and Palestinian terrorist organizations. Conversely, the European Union paid more attention to solve the roots of this conflict as a regional conflict, maintaining that peace would not be accomplished without the materialization of a Palestinian state. The European Union has always been eager to have more political leverage in the conflict. In addition, the Bush administration envisioned Iraq as the combat zone against terrorism; whereas the European Union conceived that the American invasion to Iraq would breed more terrorism in the region as well as globally.

Moreover, the Bush administration embraced the conviction that rogue states must be contained and isolated, whereas the European Union advanced that rogue states must be engaged with. Therefore, it was unsurprising that the transatlantic strategies diverged over the best tools for their foreign policies. Whereas the NSS adopted the use of military force as a core of its policy, the ESS embraced a mixture of hard and soft power with more emphasis on European civilian power. Whereas the NSS espoused preemption, implying military attacks to achieve regimes change, the ESS adopted a preemptive engagement that implied crises management.

Whereas the NSS saw unilateralism as the driving force in foreign affairs, the ESS embraced effective multilateralism. Also, NSS 2006 supported the guiding principles of NSS 2002, albeit with a shift of attention from Iraq and Afghanistan to Iran, Syria, Hamas and Hezbollah and with more attention to cooperation with the European allies.

In addition, this dissertation examined three case studies, Iraq, Iran, and the Palestinian-Israeli conflict, regarding both the multi-dimensional theoretical approach and the transatlantic strategies and priorities in the Middle East. Pertaining to the Iraq crisis, transatlantic divergences and convergences were analyzed using three theoretical perspectives: neo-realist, neo-liberalist, and constructivist. The neo-realistic reasons for transatlantic divergence over the Iraq war in 2003 were divided into two levels of analysis: the US-EU level and the US-EU member states level. As for the US-EU level, neo-realistic rationales were anchored in the fact that the Cold War had ended and a unipolar world headed by the United States had emerged; the asymmetry of the military capabilities between the United States and Europe that prompted the emergence of Robert Kagan's metaphors of Venus (Europe) versus March (the United States), and the European Kantian principles versus the Hobbsian nature of the U.S. In addition, the September 11 trauma coincided with and crystallized Bush's doctrine that combined preemption, unilateralism, and the usefulness of military power to bring about regime change in the so-called rogue states.

Moreover, divergent transatlantic threat perceptions became very visible in the Iraq case. In contrast to the European Union, what mattered to the Bush administration was not the WMD capabilities of the rogue states but the hostile character of their political regime; therefore regime change became the ultimate American solution. Iraq was the bottom line of these different transatlantic perceptions. Europe was not convinced of the necessity of using military force to address the Iraqi threat. The United States, on the other hand, perceived the Iraqi threat as extremely perilous and severe, particularly the question whether Saddam Hussein provided terrorist groups with WMD. Therefore, the transatlantic divergence over the Iraq war was chiefly over *when* military force might be useful or not and over the most appropriate tools of action.

Furthermore, transatlantic global interests considerably diverged in Bush's first term. The United States opted for a more assertive military role that would consolidate its global status and hegemony and extremely underestimated the value of international organizations, something highly esteemed in Europe. Finally, the European Union was divided between a Franco-German

endeavor to establish a soft balance to the United States, preferring a multipolar international system and consultation, and an Atlantic Europe that quickly jumped on the bandwagon with the United States to enhance American goodwill and to restrain the power of the Franco-German axis.

As for the US-EU member states, Atlantic Europe (the United Kingdom, Spain, and Italy) aligned themselves with the United States in the Iraq war because Britain under Prime Minister Blair desired to reinforce its long-standing special relationship with the United States in order to participate in the global leadership as well as to counterbalance France in the EU; Italy under Berlusconi also sought to reinforce its status in Europe, both against Germany and France by aligning with the United States, and Spain under Aznar sought the American assistance to put an end to the separation movement ETA. The same rationale applied to “New Europe” which perceived the United States and NATO, not Europe, as their genuine security assurance against Russia as well as a balance against the German-Franco axis in Europe.

The neo-liberalist reasons for the transatlantic divergence over the Iraq war in 2003 were mainly over the value gaps between the United States and Europe. Transatlantic allies diverged over the values of international order, international institutions, social and economic policies, the role of the state, and faith and morality. In the Iraq case, the Bush administration and the European Union diverged extremely over the utility of international organizations, particularly the United Nations. The Bush administration resorted only to the Security Council to reinforce its loyal ally Britain but disregarded it at the end of the day and went unilaterally to war against Iraq; Europe (particularly Core Europe), on the other hand, highly esteemed the role of the United Nations and multilateralism as an end in itself.

In addition, domestic rationales for the transatlantic divergences over the Iraq war were considerable. American foreign policy was to all intents and purposes hijacked by two domestic events; September 11 and the neo-conservatives agenda that had always opted for toppling the Iraq regime. The European Union, on the other hand, was extremely divided in its national foreign policies: The German and French governments under Schroeder and Chirac, respectively, were motivated to play with the Iraq war in their domestic elections, as public opinion in both countries had clearly turned against the war, whereas Spain’s Aznar gambled for American support in his fight against ETA and Italy and Britain wanted to have a say in the international arena as well as on the European continent. Moreover, different decision-making processes in the

United States and Europe became evident. During the Iraq war, President Bush dominated American foreign policy at the expense of Congress. During his presidency, American foreign policy was hijacked by the Secretary of Defense and the president declaring war against Iraq. On the other hand, the institutional constraints in Europe's decision making process, particularly having a disunited CFSP or ESDP, pushed Europe to pursue civilian policies. Security issues became dominant in national European policies, which explained the emergence of different transatlantic and Europeanist camps in Europe with respect to the Iraq war.

The constructivist reasons for transatlantic divergence over the Iraq war revolved around the diverse identities as well as the diverse understanding of the same values, particularly the value of multilateralism. In a sense, historically, the identity of the European Union established itself in comparison with the United States whereas the United States identifies itself as an exceptional nation. In the Iraq case, the United States rebuffed multilateralism which is a core strategic element in European identity. Therefore, core Europe's strategic culture rejected the war. France's rejection of the war was partly a result of the French national identity. France has a historical aspiration towards being a great power and has always considered Europe as a global power; therefore, it refused American hegemony. The German behavior belied its hunger to be perceived as a great power and to be against the American unilateralist policies. On the other hand, the support of New Europe for the United States in the Iraq war was partly driven by their strategic culture and identical inclination towards the United States in order to emancipate these countries from their Communist past.

The neo-realistic reasons for transatlantic convergences in the post-war phase revolved around the augmented American predicaments in Iraq combined with the European lack of enthusiasm to engage in post-war military operations and a global and regional decreasing of US legitimacy due to the non-materialization of WMD in Iraq and the Abu Ghareeb scandal. Therefore, the United States desired a European-burden sharing in Iraq. Europe, on the other hand, attempted to engage in forming a new Iraqi regime lest the upheavals and the instability of Iraq would destabilize the Middle East and breed more terrorism in the region. Therefore, democratization of Iraq turned out to be a common transatlantic goal and Europe perceived American leadership for all the security troubles in the Middle East as indispensable. Moreover, the increasing shift of the international influence towards the East pushed both Europe and the United States to pragmatically converge over Iraq.

The neo-liberalist reasons for transatlantic convergences in the post-war phase revolved around the shared transatlantic values that have always been used by each side to consolidate their solidarity after any rift. For the most part, the transatlantic divergences over Iraq were never over the goal (ousting the Iraqi regime), but only over the tools (war or containment and isolation). As for the domestic factors, the American administration suffered from budget and trade deficits, a decline of the domestic support for Bush's war in Iraq, and, most importantly, its loss of control over the two legislative branches of Congress. Also, changing governments in Germany, France, Italy, Spain, and Britain coincided with personnel changes in the second Bush administration, which paved the way for a more pragmatic transatlantic convergence over Iraq.

Regarding Iran, historically transatlantic policies witnessed divergent approaches and tools of action. Ever since the Islamic revolution in 1979, the United States embraced isolation as a guiding principle for its Iranian policies, whereas Europe espoused political dialogue. Thereby, since the possibility of a nuclear Iran in 2002, transatlantic policies were broadly identical over the main goal: preventing a nuclear Iran. Nevertheless, transatlantic policies witnessed two phases of divergences and convergences with respect to the suitable approaches and tools of action. The first phase (2002-2005) was exemplified by a transatlantic divergence over the appropriate tools but never over the crucial objective. The second phase (2005-2009) witnessed two stages of transatlantic convergence: The first (2005-2008) was a pragmatic transatlantic convergence and the second (2008-2009) was a more principled and pragmatic transatlantic convergence over Iran.

In the first phase, transatlantic policies converged only over the goal of preventing Iran from being a nuclear power, which would initiate an arms race in the Middle East, pose an existential threat to Israel, and launch an aggressive regional power that would thwart Western interests in the Middle East. Nevertheless, transatlantic policies diverged extremely over the approach and the tools of action. The neo-realistic rationales of transatlantic divergences over Iran in this phase revolved around four reasons: The first was that both Europe and the United States perceived the magnitude and competence of international institutions to resolve the Iranian crisis differently. In a sense, the Bush administration embraced unilateralism and the use of military force as the best strategic tools to face the spread of weapons of mass destruction as stipulated in its WMD strategy, whereas Europe adopted effective multilateralism as strategic tool, which in effect meant diplomacy and negotiations with Iran. The second reason was that the

Iranian crisis was addressed in the context of the Afghani and the Iraqi wars. In a sense, the United States was on its acme of power in 2003. Therefore, the Bush administration was very much inclined to use its military power to topple the Iranian regime, turned down an Iranian proposal to settle its problems with the United States in May 2003, accused Iran of causing troubles in Iraq, and did not support the European negotiations with Iran. Instead, the US vigorously sought to refer the Iranian crisis to the Security Council as a prelude for sanctions, isolation, and even a probable military attack. The EU3, on the other hand, publically refused to submit the case to the Security Council and focused instead on the competency of the International Atomic Energy Agency. In the context of the dreadful experience of Iraq, the EU3 sought to avoid another transatlantic and inner-European crack that would have ultimately undermined, if not dismantled, the European Common Foreign and Security Policy. In addition, Europe's reputation as a global power was extremely at stake in the aftermath of the Iraq war. Therefore, exerting a coherent endeavor by the EU3 was driven by their desire to renew its global credibility, reinforce the role of the IAEA as a tool to address the proliferation of WMD, and provide evidence of the usefulness of diplomacy instead of forced regime change.

The third reason was that the Iranian regime was perceived differently by the United States and Europe. The Bush administration was convinced that the main source of threat was not the nuclear Iranian ambitions but the Iranian regime itself. For instance, the administration initiated a strategic relationship with India in July 2005. Consequently, India became a nuclear power outside of the Non-Proliferation Treaty, but was perceived by the US as a responsible state while Iran was considered a rogue state. Also, the United States was the main supporter of the Iranian nuclear program in the Shah era. Europe, on the other hand, perceived Iran as a stabilizing regional power in the Middle East; as a result Europe opted for mutual economic relations and a critical and even a comprehensive dialogue with Tehran. Unlike the United States, the Europeans focused on changing the behavior of the Iranian regime by supporting the reformists in Iran. The fourth reason was that Europe has always opted for strengthening the role of the United Nations through the IAEA to address the proliferation of WMD and felt that the American approach regarding Iran undermined both international law and the United Nations. Furthermore, unlike the United States, which had had no economic relations with Iran for more than a quarter of a century, European states had numerous economic ties with Tehran.

Neo-liberalist reasons for transatlantic divergences over Iran revolved around the domestic scene in both the United States and the EU3 member states. As for the United States, the first Bush administration was profoundly controlled by the neoconservatives, who enthusiastically urged isolating if not toppling the Iranian regime. This conflict within the first Bush administration between the hawks and the doves resulted in a crucial victory of the hawks. Four pieces of evidence materialized to show this victory of the hawks: First, the Bush administration adopted the idea of regime change and refused to talk to the Iranians; second, Bush rebuffed the Iranian proposal for settlement; third, Bush negatively perceived the Tehran agreement; and fourth intense deliberations over the military plans to strike Iran flourished in this period. The EU3, on the other hand, were united by the force of the learning effect in Iraq. In other words, the Iranian case was the last salvation to their almost compromised European Common Foreign and Security Policy. Nevertheless, the three big European states had their domestic rationales and motives to move swiftly towards negotiation with Iran. The British government could not bear more public dissatisfaction over a new transatlantic discord over the Iranian nuclear threat; also, it aspired to restore its undermined credibility within the European continent and to heal the transatlantic rifts after the war in Iraq. The German government sought a more assertive global role and a permanent seat in the Security Council, whereas the French government sought a more robust international clout. European economic investments and interests in Iran also explained the European attitude during the Iranian crisis.

Constructivist reasons for transatlantic divergence over Iran revolved around the different historical experiences of both the European Union and the United States, which defined their different values and identities. Europe's recent history is based on the European integration process that highly appreciates negotiation, dialogue and multilateralism, while the United States' recent history is based on the fact that material power is indispensable to accomplish American interests. In addition, both Europe and the United States had different historical experiences with Iran. Unlike the United States, which perceived Iran negatively as a rogue state for more than thirty years, Europe perceived it as a legitimate state and as a regional power to be reckoned with in the Middle East.

The second phase (2005-2009) witnessed two stages of transatlantic convergence: the first (2005-2008) was a pragmatic transatlantic convergence and the second (2008-2009) was a more principled and pragmatic transatlantic convergence over Iran. Regarding the first stage,

when a pragmatic transatlantic convergence materialized, the United States turned out to be softer and Europe turned out to be harder. In a sense, three pieces of evidence turned the United States softer with respect to the Iranian crisis: First the second Bush administration showed its readiness for negotiation and diplomacy during Bush's tour in Europe; second, in March 2005 the Bush administration publically supported the European negotiations with Tehran and offered some inducements; third, in May 2006 the United States declared its willingness to directly engage in the European negotiations with Iran, provided that Tehran completely suspended its uranium enrichment. Europe, on the other hand, turned to be harder under the pressure of the Iranian defiance and refusal of all European offers, Ahmadinejad's antagonistic policies and rhetoric against the West and Israel, and the new American political flexibility in addressing the Iranian case.

The neo-realistic reasons for transatlantic convergence over Iran, manifesting themselves in American softness, were attributed to the dwindling of the American military power (hard) and legitimacy (soft), the tremendous peril of a military strike against Iran, as well as the augmented Iranian regional influence in the Middle East. In other words, the United States' military power was deeply overstretched in Iraq and Afghanistan to the extent that it was impossible to launch a third war against Iran. In addition, the United States' global legitimacy increasingly diminished in the aftermath of the discovery that the American allegations of existence of WMD in Iraq had been wrong and of the atrocities at Abu Ghareeb. Besides, an American military strike against the Iranian nuclear facilities would not destroy the Iranian nuclear capabilities but only hinder them for a few years. A military strike would also consolidate the Iranian regime, speed-up its willingness and desire to possess a nuclear bomb, and would even prompt destructive Iranian retaliations in Iraq, the Strait of Hormuz, and elsewhere in the Middle East. Moreover, a more emboldened and defiant Iran emerged from American doing when the United States toppled the Iraqi regime and the Taliban regime that had been balancing the Iranian power. Iran had a blatant influence in Iraq and gained a financial and an economic fortune from increasing oil prices as well.

The European hardness, on the other hand, resulted from the successive Iranian refusals to its diplomatic proposals and offers that combined numerous economic incentives, particularly the August 2005 proposal, which was backed by the United States. In addition, the victory of the Iranian hardliner Ahmadinejad in 2005 deliberately increased the hurdle to reach

an agreement because of his unwillingness to compromise with regard to Iran's nuclear program. Besides, Ahmadinejad added more fuel to the fire when he questioned the Holocaust and threatened to wipe Israel from the map. Moreover, the flexibility of the American position and its readiness to join the European efforts with regard to Iran in the beginning of 2005 led to a more convergent European position with the United States. Therefore, transatlantic convergence materialized in their agreement to refer the Iranian case to the Security Council, particularly after the increasing Iranian defiance and its non-cooperative attitude.

At the beginning of 2006, a stronger transatlantic convergence materialized following the referral of the Iranian nuclear issue to the Security Council. Russia and China, as global players, became part of the picture, opposing tougher sanctions on Iran. Both the United States and Europe had to make concessions concerning the three resolutions against Iran to ensure unanimity in the Security Council. Therefore, a transatlantic awareness of challenging and rising authoritarian powers served as a unifying factor between Europe and the United States with respect to Iran. Both China and Russia used the National Intelligence Estimate (NIE) report in 2007, which confirmed that Iran would not be able to get a nuclear bomb until 2015, as an alibi not to pressure Iran or even impose the sanctions both Europe and the United States sought. In addition, both China and Russia used the Iranian crisis as a bargaining chip with both Europe and the United States to attain other political and economic interests.

Regarding the second stage, a more deeply pragmatic and more principled transatlantic convergence over Iran materialized. Three structural reasons for transatlantic convergence materialized in 2008-2009: The first was a shift from American unipolarity to multipolarity; the second was an erosion of the American reputation and popularity caused by Bush's policies; and the third was the emergence of the international financial crisis in 2008. In the same year, the US Intelligence Council released a report titled *Global Trends 2025: A Transformed World*. The report predicted that the international system would slowly shift from an American unipolar into a multipolar system. This shift was inevitable as a result of the rise of other powers such as China and Russia, the increase of the global economy, and the shift of wealth and economic power from West to East. Therefore, diplomacy and cooperation with European allies would be the best, if not the sole, option. The Obama administration embraced this option and was even inclined to a revitalized transatlantic partnership. Besides, if diplomacy failed with Tehran, Europe would enthusiastically support harsher American sanctions and procedures against Iran.

In addition, there had been a considerable decline of the US image and legitimacy as a superpower as a result of Bush's policies for about a decade. In other words, the legitimacy of US leadership was highly questioned, both in Europe and in the rest of the world. Therefore, the Obama administration sought to restore the American leadership through cooperating with Europe, also regarding Iran. Moreover, an unprecedented international financial crisis struck the global economy and the United States and Europe in particular, resulting in a decline of American economic dominance. This decline manifested itself in an alarming US budget deficit and a steep increase of its national debt in 2008. Therefore, the United States turned to be increasingly reliant on the Asian countries to cover its debts and to invest in the American economy. This explained the Obama administration's reluctance to criticize China for its human rights abuses and also the American amendments to its economic stimulus package that took China's interests into consideration.

Europe, on the other hand, praised the Obama administration's approach that catered to the European desire by embracing diplomacy and alliances as guiding principles for US foreign policy. Europe realized that the Bush administration had not given diplomacy a chance in the Iranian crisis and had instead used diplomacy as an instrument to tighten economic sanctions against Tehran. The Obama administration, on the other hand, aligned with the genuine European endeavor to solve the Iranian crisis peacefully. Moreover, Europe was even more frightened of being marginalized in a shifting international system at the expense of the West. Therefore, a European weakness pushed Europe to latch on the transatlantic pillar as a pretext to minimize its strategic responsibilities and delegate its own regional security and global stability to the United States.

Neo-Liberalist reasons for transatlantic convergences over Iran were also divided into two stages. The first stage (2005-2008) witnessed domestic challenges and changes within both Europe and the United States that influenced their policies regarding Iran. In the United States, there was a remarkable personnel change in the second Bush administration. Numerous well-known neo-conservative and ideological politicians were being replaced by more pragmatic officials under the auspices of Condoleezza Rice as a Secretary of State. Rice embraced diplomacy and gave it more weight in the foreign policy of the second Bush administration. Therefore, more transatlantic convergence became visible between Europe and the United States. Nonetheless, two prominent hawks, Dick Cheney and Donald Rumsfeld, remained in the second

Bush administration and pushed for a direct armed confrontation with Iran. However, by mid-2006, the Republican Party lost its majority in Congress. As a result, the Bush administration was deeply constrained and the threat of a double military strike against Iran waned. In addition, the situation was worsened by the fading popularity of the Bush administration because of the upheavals in Iraq and Afghanistan and the mounting budget deficit. As for Europe, changes within both the French and the German governments led to more transatlantic convergences over Iran. The second stage (2008-2009) witnessed a principled transatlantic convergence over Iran. This was because Obama embraced the multilateralism long desired by the Europeans as a guiding principle in his foreign policy. Although the second Bush administration turned to a more multilateral approach, Europeans remained skeptical about its unilateralist tendencies. Obama, on the other hand, made it clear that unilateralism has no place in addressing the Iranian crisis and even asked the Europeans for more burden-sharing. Obama's agenda and personality became highly popular with both the European governments and the European public opinions. In addition, Obama's cabinet members were mostly well-known for their pragmatism as well as their willingness to revitalize the transatlantic partnership as a way to address the mounting Iranian crisis.

Regarding the Palestinian-Israeli conflict, from a historical perspective the United States mainly controlled the political process, whereas the European Union played a complementary role, albeit with a highly developed declaratory policy. The transatlantic conduct with respect to the Palestinian-Israeli conflict was divided into three stages: In the first stage, from 2000 until 2005, the United States disengaged at the core and Europe got involved at the margins. In other words, the Bush administration adopted a hands-off policy with respect to the conflict at the beginning of its term, followed by a rhetorical re-engagement against the backdrop of its war against terrorism. Concurrently, Europe had a marginal involvement in the conflict that was extremely evident in the Quartet, the Road Map, and the Gaza disengagement. In the second stage from 2006 until 2008, the United States got more involved in the conflict and Europe also became more engaged. A further transatlantic convergence became visible as a result of the Hamas victory in the Palestinian legislative elections in 2006 and the Palestinian partition between Hamas in Gaza and Fatah in the West Bank in 2007. In the midst of the Annapolis conference in 2007 and the Gaza war 2008-2009, a model of leader-follower (US-EU) evolved as a noteworthy trait of transatlantic relations. In the third stage from the end of 2008 until the

end of 2009, Obama's era, a greater transatlantic convergence appeared with a renewed aggressive American engagement towards the conflict together with Europe's support.

Neo-realist explanations for transatlantic policies with respect to the Palestinian-Israeli conflict revolved around the fact that the Bush administration initially embraced a hands-off policy based on the judgment that the engagement of the preceding administration had produced no results, and that the responsibility of solving the conflict lied chiefly with the conflicting parts with the United States a mere facilitator. However, the Bush administration was being forced to rhetorically engage in the conflict after the September 11 attacks. Against the backdrop of the US plan to occupy Afghanistan, Bush declared his vision of the two-state solution in his speech at the United Nations. This rhetorical engagement was driven primarily from an American motivation to gain the consent of the Arab states and Europe to its global war against terrorism, particularly in Afghanistan.

Another American rhetorical engagement in the conflict was envisioned in 2002 against the background of the Bush administration's plans to conquer Iraq. In that context, the Quartet was endorsed by the United States and allowed symbolic participation of Europe, Russia, and the United Nations in the Palestinian-Israeli conflict. Therefore, the Bush administration sought the support of its European allies and the Arab states by means of an American promise to resolve the conflict after the invasion of Iraq. After the transatlantic split over the American invasion to Iraq, the United States released the Road Map, which was genuinely a European proposal, to alleviate the transatlantic rifts as well as to hide its failure in Iraq, particularly its failure to find the alleged WMD. However, the Road Map was designed and approved according to Israeli terms. The decisive explanation for the American policy was the U.S. special economic, political, military, and cultural relations with Israel. In other words, American-Israeli relations reached its acme during the Bush administration and Sharon government. One major example was the letter Bush delivered to Sharon in 2004 denying the Palestinian right of return and the 1967 borders in any forthcoming final settlement between Israel and the Palestinians.

Europe has always taken its complementary to the United States' leading role in the Palestinian-Israeli peace process since Oslo accords 1993. Nevertheless, the European Union was motivated to attain more political clout in the conflict during the stalemate of the Oslo process in 2000 and the Bush administration's reluctance to engage in the conflict. This materialized when Europe became a member of the Quartet and drafted the Road Map's outline

that the United States later adopted after it was revised according to Israeli terms. In other words, the European Union would not have had a more political role in the Palestinian-Israeli conflict if the Bush administration had not dumped a half century of a long-lasting American strategy to thwart any other players from having a say in the Israeli-Palestinian conflict.

Although Europe engaged more in the conflict, its real effect was at the margins for numerous reasons. First, the EU had no common foreign and security policy. Instead the European Union depended profoundly on the diverse intergovernmental and national policies of each European state. The low efficacy of the European Union was manifested in the Seville Declaration of 2002, which affirmed that any final settlement between Israel and the Palestinians should be founded on the 1967 borders. However, in practice, the European officials could not meet Palestinian leaders lest that they might outrage the Israeli government. Europe also continued to import Israeli settlements products. In other words, the European declarations towards the Israeli-Palestinian conflict never been developed into tangible actions. Second, Israel continued to be reluctant and suspicious towards any genuine political European role in the conflict, which it had always played down. This Israeli attitude was essentially based on the perception that Europe is at large pro-Arab and pro-Palestinian and that the United States should be the sole mediator in the peace process. For instance, during a visit of Javier Solana to the Middle East in mid-2004, Sharon explicitly argued that Europe would never have a genuine role in the peace process unless it modified its positions and seriously considered Israel's security. Another example was in 2003 when the Israeli government refused to meet the European special envoy to the Middle East, Marc Otte, because he also convened with Arafat.

Third, not only Israel but also the United States has always been unwilling to give the European Union a genuine political role in the conflict. Since the end of the Cold War and as a result of the unbalanced power relations between the United States and Europe, an implicit formula of division of labor materialized. The United States monopolized the entire political process, whereas Europe reinforced the American efforts economically and created a regional environment favorable for peace through multilateral cooperation with the Arab states. Although the Bush administration endorsed Europe as part of the Quartet, it did not fully relinquish its control over the conflict. In other words, the European Union accepted to follow the American leading role in the peace process, as there was no other method to have a say in the conflict.

Although the Quartet membership gave Europe a political role in the Palestinian-Israeli conflict for the first time, the Quartet's performance was chiefly controlled by the United States. Three examples support this argument: the Road Map was released only after it was revised and revamped on American and Israeli terms; the United States released the Road Map only after the Palestinians enacted a political reform that created a prime minister position; and the United States released the Road Map unilaterally. Nevertheless, the political involvement of the European Union in the conflict was augmented after the Israeli unilateral disengagement from Gaza Strip because of the rapid increase of the military component of the European Security and Defence Policy. The European Union showed a robust interventionist power of engagement to the United States. In addition, the European Union was effective in the Palestinian-Israeli conflict through working in harmony and under the model of the American leadership as a complementary power. This explained the fact that Israel endorsed for the first time two ESDP missions to monitor the Gaza borders and to train the Palestinian police.

In the second stage from 2006 until 2008, the United States became more involved in the conflict, Europe also became more engaged and a further transatlantic convergence became visible. The reasons for this revolved mainly around the increasing American quandary in both Iraq and Afghanistan; at this time both Iraq and Afghanistan were at the brink of a civil war and an augmented insurgency against the American troops. Therefore, the Bush administration sought regional and global support for both Iraq and Afghanistan. In addition, the war between Israel and Hezbollah in July 2006 resulted in an even greater decline of the US reputation and influence within the region. Hamas' triumph in 2006 and its coup d'état in Gaza resulted in a severe divide within Palestine and augmented Iran's regional influence. Faced by those facts, the Bush administration had to adjust its policy towards the Israeli-Palestinian conflict and documented a greater willingness to get involved through the Annapolis conference, even if it had been overdue and delivered only modest results. In addition, European and Arab influence on the United States was remarkable. As a result of the far-reaching sectarian attacks in Iraq, the Arab states, particularly Saudi Arabia and Jordan, pledged to help the United States in return for an American resuscitation of the peace process. The United States was also driven by a desire to attain the moderate Arab states' assistance to restrain the growing Iranian pursuit to become a nuclear power. Furthermore, regional changes in the Middle East went against the grain of the United States. The extremist camp of states and non-state actors (Iran, Syria, Hezbollah, and

Hamas) stood against the moderate camp (Egypt, Saudi Arabia, Jordan, and the Fatah government in the West Bank). This meant that the sway and the credibility of the United States in the Middle East were on the wane against the extremist camp. In that sense, the Annapolis conference aimed to strengthen the moderate camp versus the extremist camp as well as the Fatah government and President Abbas in the West Bank versus the Hamas government in the Gaza Strip.

As for the European Union, it fully embraced the American West Bank first strategy after Hamas seized power, which basically intended to isolate Hamas. While the United States sought to topple the Hamas regime, most European states hoped that Hamas might change its extremist behavior with respect to Israel. Although some European member states were considering the likelihood of talking to Hamas, they went along with the US isolationist policy. The European position was mainly a result of US pressure; Europe even broke away from its long-term strategy of dialogue with rogue regimes and retreated from its democratization project in the Middle East.

There are three examples to signify the US leader-EU follower model with respect to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict: First, after Israel's military incursion to Gaza in 2006, some European states attempted to initiate a European initiative to resolve the conflict but failed to secure the support of the European Council. Second, the Quartet was mainly driven by the United States. In 2002, when Arafat was in power, the Quartet aimed at empowering the prime minister's authorities at the expense of the president's authorities. In 2006, after Hamas seized power, the Quartet sought to empower President Abbas at the expense of the Hamas government. Third, the Bush administration appointed Tony Blair as a representative of the Middle East Quartet unilaterally and without consulting the Europeans. Nevertheless, because of the geographical proximity and the mounting repercussions of the stalemate in the conflict after Hamas seized Gaza in 2007; European states urged the United States to re-launch the peace process again in Annapolis. Yet, Europe remained in its complementary role to the United States through the Quartet. This became clear in the EU Action Plan for the Middle East peace process in October 2007.

Neo-liberal explanations of transatlantic policies towards the conflict (2000-2008) revolved around the ideology of the neo-conservatives, the Israeli lobby, and Congress during the Bush administration's two terms. In a sense, the neo-cons believed that democracy preceded the resolution of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, that the Palestinian violence and not the Israeli

policies troubled the Middle East peace process, and that a democratization of the Palestinians was a prerequisite for preliminary talks. This explained the fact that the Bush administration pursued a policy of regime change within Palestine by sidelining if not removing Arafat and strengthening Abbas as Prime Minister and provided that Palestinian should hold political and economic reforms in order to create the envisioned Palestinian state.

Undoubtedly, the Israeli lobby had an effect on the Bush administration's policies towards the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. Two examples were enlisted in this respect: First, in 2002 Bush asked Sharon to halt the Israeli settlements but later withdrew his request under the pressure of Congress. Ever since the Israeli occupation of the Palestinian territories in 1967, all American presidents had refuted Israeli settlement activities. And all of them, including George W. Bush, had attempted to bring the Israeli settlement activities to an end, yet their endeavors had always been unsuccessful due to the Israeli lobby. Although George W. H. Bush's administration threatened to refuse an Israeli request for \$10 billion in loan guarantees in 1992, it shortly after released the loan guarantees and the Israeli settlements rapidly increased. Accordingly, the George W. Bush administration remained silent about the Israeli settlement activities until the end of its second term. Even when George W. Bush's administration re-engaged in the conflict in its last year in office, through the Annapolis conference, settlements swiftly increased afterwards. The second example was in 2002 when Sharon instigated the Operation Defensive Shield against almost all of the West Bank, and Bush asked Sharon to pull the Israeli troops out at the beginning of April. However, Bush had to retreat again and later even praised Sharon as a man of peace under the pressure of Congress. Moreover, the American Congress has always given its ultimate support to the Israeli policies and has always urged subsequent American administrations to abide by the ultimate and the unconditional support to Israel. For instance, at the end of 2001, 89% of the American Senate advocated Israel's right to strike against Palestinian terrorism relentlessly and asked Bush not to dissuade Israel.

On the other hand, the European Union continued its dichotomy of being a political dwarf and an economic giant in international affairs. This was mainly due to the intergovernmental nature of the European Common Foreign Policy. In other words, the European member states have always been reluctant to relinquish their sovereignty to the CFSP. Therefore, the national foreign policies of the member states were the driving force in addressing the Palestinian-Israeli conflict. In addition, the changes in European governments, whether they were

pro-America or not, determined the nature of transatlantic policies with respect to the conflict. For instance, Merkel in Germany 2005 and Sarkozy in 2007 made the transatlantic convergence over the Middle East more possible and tangible.

Constructivist explanations of transatlantic policies towards the conflict revolved around the different transatlantic outlooks on Israel, the role of religion in the conflict, and the strategic culture of the transatlantic allies. Europeans contented that Israel should be secure in the Middle East and that the Palestinian-Israeli conflict was a matter of moral equivalence. The Americans consider Israel a most trusted ally and the sole democratic state in the Middle East. In addition, ethical and religious rationales stood behind the popular American support of Israel. The attacks of September 11 even reinforced the solidarity between the two countries as being common victims of and common fighters against radical Islamic terrorism. Moreover, Europeans are at large secular and even consider religion as a hazard, whereas most Americans strongly appreciate the role of the religion in their lives. In the bible, Israel is the Promised Land and some Americans believe that the return of the Jews to the ancient land is a prerequisite to the return of Christ and the end of the world.

Furthermore, American strategic culture is based on moral and ethical principles: liberty, democracy, self-determination, and Judeo-Christian morality. Those principles form the American identity through which the Palestinian-Israeli standoff was addressed. In the context of Bush's global war against terrorism, the United States saw itself in the same boat with Israel, as victims and strugglers against terrorism, whether in Afghanistan or in Palestine. Since Israel is perceived as the sole democracy in the Middle East and the place of the Christ's return, it needs to be ultimately secured and supported. The European Union's strategic culture, on the other hand, is founded on diplomacy, international law, support of democracy, rule of law, human rights, peaceful solutions of conflicts, and the attractiveness of soft power versus hard power. The crux of the European Union is also founded on the conviction that nationalism and religion have been responsible for wars and the upheavals within Europe. Consequently, the notion of Europe is to craft a war free-zone where economic prosperity prevails and where states voluntarily relinquish parts of their sovereignty for a post-national entity. This partially explains the European eagerness to back up the Oslo and Madrid accords because they would create a new "Europe" in the Middle East. This also explains the European vision of the Palestinian state as viable, democratic, sovereign, and based on the 1967 borders, compared to a less detailed

American vision that concentrates on replacement of leaders, institutions, and security arrangements as a precondition for a provisional Palestinian state, as the Bush administration explicitly mentioned.

The weakness and inefficiency of the European Union and its following of the US lead in the Palestinian-Israeli conflict was derived from its strategic culture which makes Europe prefer what is doable to what is best: EU representatives prefer prolonged discussions to swiftly taking resolutions, and to act with a strict consensus. This explains the fact that Europe's role in the Palestinian-Israeli conflict was strictly confined to a diplomatically and economically backing up the United States' dominating role in the conflict; to the use of European soft power to reconstruct the Palestinian infrastructure that Israel demolished, and to financial support to the Palestinian authority in order to keep it from collapsing. It also explains the European compliance to the US resolution to list Hamas as a terrorist group in 2003 and to isolate a democratically elected government led by Hamas since 2006.

Neo-realist explanations for the Obama administration's aggressive engagement in the Palestinian-Israeli conflict revolved mainly around the inheritance of the Bush administration's Middle Eastern policies. Obama inherited two wars, in Afghanistan and Iraq, an increasingly Iranian nuclear threat, an enormous domestic and global recession, and a mounting erosion of the credibility and the hegemony of the United States in the world, particularly in the Middle East. Therefore, in its endeavor to restore American leadership on the globe in general and in the Middle East in particular, the Obama administration vigorously engaged in the conflict from the outset of its term. This endeavor was based on the finding that resolving the Israeli-Palestinian conflict is the key to regain its lost reputation as an honest broker and repair its spoiled image in the region.

The neo-liberalist explanations of Obama's aggressive engagement were a mixture of the chances of and constraints on his administration. As for the chances, Obama initially was popular in the United States and enjoyed a rock-solid majority in Congress. In addition, although American public opinion has always supported Israel at the expense of the Palestinians, a majority of Americans supported Obama's even-handed approach in the conflict. For instance, a Pew Research Center poll as in June 2009 revealed that two-third of Americans believed that Obama made the right decisions in addressing the Middle East conflict. Another poll in the same month found that only 46% of Americans believed that Israel was really dedicated to peace

compared to 66% in December 2008. Moreover, the members of the Obama Administration were obviously neutral and embraced the smart power ideology. Most of the administration's prominent figures such as Robert Gates and James Robert Jones, along with Obama, believed that Washington would never be able to attain its interests in the Middle East without an aggressive engagement in the Israeli-Palestinian conflict.

On the other hand, the domestic constraints on the Obama administration were also colossal. The American Congress has traditionally been a staunch supporter of Israel. For instance, when George W.H. Bush attempted in 1991-1992 to compel Israel to halt settlements construction through halting its loan guarantees, Congress heavily condemned him and ultimately supported Israel. Unsurprisingly, identical pressure was put on the Obama administration. At the end of May 2009, a bi-Partisan memo from the Democratic majority leader and the Republican minority leader was sent to the White House, asking the President not to put pressure on Israel regarding the settlement activities. Later on, it was discovered that the memo was drafted by the American-Israeli Public Affairs Committee.

From a neo-realistic perspective, Europe enthusiastically supported the Obama administration's engagement in the conflict based on the fact that Europe's political weight on the globe had been diminishing. Therefore, getting along with the United States over the Palestinian-Israeli conflict would be a European pretext to entrust the United States its strategic responsibilities whether regionally or globally. Additionally, an increasing split of European member states over the Middle East issue became evident. Therefore, Europe preferred to hide itself behind the US leadership and the Quartet. However, the genuine rationale behind this was the American and the Israeli reluctance to any European autonomous action in the conflict that might jeopardize the transatlantic relations. Moreover, solving the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, as Obama envisioned, has been a pressing European strategic priority because of its geographical proximity to the Middle East as well as its direct effect on European security, whether that meant terrorist attacks or Muslim and Arab migrants in Europe. Therefore, the European Union attempted to facilitate Obama's endeavors to solve the conflict. This was evident in the French proposal, in the aftermath of the Obama's election, for closer regional and global transatlantic cooperation, particularly in the Middle East.

From a neo-liberal perspective, Europe supported Obama because he in fact adopted the priorities and the values that the Europeans have always been calling for. Likewise, the

popularity of Obama's foreign policy in Europe reached its acme and exceeded the ratings for his predecessor by four times in 2008. Therefore, the European desire for the American leadership increased rapidly in 2009. Finally, from a constructivist perspective, although Europe has multiple identities vis-à-vis the United States, ranging from bilateral to defence and security relations, European politicians, academics, and intellectuals highly perceived the transatlantic relationship as the cornerstone of their security as well as their identity.

The dissertation's second part revolved around the elite Arab perception of the transatlantic policies towards Middle East. The findings of the Arab perceptions of the transatlantic policies in the Middle East were as follows:

Anchored chiefly in neo-realist assumptions, the Arab pundits perceived the Bush administration's policies in the Middle East in an extraordinarily depressing way. In other words, they depicted the administration as aggressive, unfair, offensive, confused, flagrantly aligned with Israel without regard for the Arabs, unilateral, ideologist and ignorant, and generally speaking unconstructive towards the Muslims in general and the Arabs in particular. In a sense, the United States' main goal with respect to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict was to empower the American-Israeli project in the region by giving Israel more time to accomplish its settlement project; in Iran to thwart any possible regional competitor to Israel that may possess the nuclear technology; and in Iraq to dominate the Middle East. The pundits also conceived that the United States reduced the war against terrorism to the war against Islam. In other words, Israel was the independent variable in the interview partners' perception of the Bush administration's policies in the three case studies. This can be explained by the longstanding Arab grievances with the United States which has always been aligned with Israel at the expense of Arab interests.

In addition, based on liberal assumptions, the interview partners used the coalition between the Bush administration's hawks and the military-industrial complex, close to the Israeli lobby, as an explanation for the Bush policies in Middle East. Moreover, the neo-cons and the Christian right were perceived by the interview partners as being in a solid coalition with Israel. Furthermore, based on constructivist premises, the interview partners maintained that the ideology and the religious views of the Bush administration, particularly its deep-rooted conviction in an Armageddon like war, was a crucial component in its policies towards the Palestinian-Israeli conflict.

Concomitantly, the Arab pundits perceived the European policies towards the Middle East negatively at large with some positive points at the margin. Even though Europeans were perceived by the Arabs as more balanced than the United States in their stances vis-à-vis Middle East issues, these positions were also perceived as unproductive when it came to actual politics. Therefore, European stances were depicted as subordinated to the US dictates and even complementary to the American plans in the Middle East. Although most of the pundits recognized a difference in European policies, it was only noted with respect to the appropriate tools in the Middle East. Broadly speaking, Europeans were perceived by the Arabs as payers and not as players, as facilitators and not as partners on an equal footing with the United States in the Middle East. In other words, the Arabs perceived the Europeans as useful but not essential, complementary to the equation but can never changing the results.

Based on neo-realist postulations, the interview partners explained the negative and the subordinated position of Europe to the United States in the Middle East. Similar to the dissertation findings, most of the interview partners maintained that most of the European countries bandwagoned with the United States in the Middle East, principally in the Palestinian-Israeli conflict. This was based on a European conviction that Europe would not have a genuine role in Middle East without US consent. Matching with the dissertation's findings, the interview partners recognized that Europe was more acquainted with Middle East realities than the United States. Nevertheless, Europe was divided in its CFSP and both the United States and Israel have always abstained from giving Europe any real responsibility in the conflict if it did not overlap with the American and the Israeli stances. The failure of Arab countries to put pressure on Europe to adopt concrete policies, particularly towards the Palestinian-Israeli conflict, was also a further explanation of the interview partners for the negative European negative role in Middle East.

Anchored in liberal assumptions, a small portion of the interview partners justified the European Union's marginally positive role in Middle East. They distinguished between the attitudes of both the Bush administration and Europe regarding the peace process. Unlike Europe, which has been always yearning to resolve the conflict, the Bush administration neglected the peace process for the sake of its global war against terrorism. Yet, the group of interview partners which championed a positive role of Europe in the Middle East did not relinquish the general Arab view of the European uselessness on the real ground and its ultimate

subordination to American stances. The same held true for the dissertation's findings that maintained that although Europe often deviates from the American stances in Middle East because of its different perceptions and priorities, transatlantic convergence materializes in the end.

Unlike the dissertation's findings, a small portion of the interview partners perceived European policies in the Middle East as indistinguishable from those of the United States and that both Europe and the United States played a game of role distribution in the Iraq war – the French opposition to the American invasion to Iraq was nothing but coverage to the American policies. Conversely, the dissertation maintained that there was a real split over the Iraq war between core Europe and the Bush administration. In the aftermath of the conquest, convergence became the milestone of the transatlantic policies in Iraq due to different neo-realist and neo-liberal reasons.

As for the relationship between the American and the European policies in the Middle East, statistical analysis showed that 17.4% saw a full convergence, while a much larger percentage, 65.2%, saw a mixture between convergence and divergence; 17.4% supported another answer, which meant a European subordination to the United States. Nonetheless, the general trend was that Europe was more converged with the United States despite the existence of some marginal and secondary divergences which tend to vanish at the rock of the western strategic alliance. Even if some discrepancies emerged on the surface of the transatlantic alliance, they were mainly over the tools and never over the strategic goals of the Western camp. This finding greatly matches the dissertation's first argument that transatlantic differences over the Middle East issues are mainly over details and not over the essence of their policies. Interview partners' explanations in the three categories (full convergence 17%, mixture 65%, and subordinated Europe 17%) indicated that most of the Arab pundits maintained that transatlantic policies in Middle East were more convergent than divergent.

Based on realist hypotheses, the full convergence advocates attributed this to the transatlantic joint interests in a secured and supreme Israel, a defeated fundamental Islam, and an isolated Hamas. Explanations even went further and underscored a triple conspiracy of the Bush administration, Europe, and Israel to dismantle the Arab nation. The mixture advocates' explanations were very similar to the full convergence advocates. Even though the members of this category recognized that there were apparent transatlantic divergences over the Middle East,

most of them also asserted that convergence was the constant characteristic of the transatlantic policies at the end of the day. In this category, the transatlantic mixture was attributed to the Bush administration's unilateralist and non-consultant policies, the noticeable relative power of the United States since World War II, and the absence of a common European foreign policy. Transatlantic divergences were mainly attributed to Europe's special relations with the Middle East, its geographical proximity, and its demographic and economic interests that are more critical than those of the United States. The same applied to the third category (subordination) where Europe's policies were depicted by the interview partners as nothing more than cosmetic.

When the Arab pundits were asked if there was a difference between the first and the second Bush administration, 30.4% noticed no difference, while 69.6% did. However, the general trend was that the Bush administration tried to change its style under the pressures of its failures in both Iraq and Afghanistan but never changed its strategy or its ultimate goals. The dissertation's findings were principally in harmony with two-thirds of the interview partners, namely that the second Bush administration changed its policies towards Iraq and Iran significantly and in its last year changed them symbolically towards the Palestinian-Israeli conflict. Consistent with the dissertation's findings and based principally on realist hypotheses, the bigger segment of the two thirds interview partners attributed this change to its failure in Iraq and Afghanistan, its yearning for European support and burden-sharing, and its longing for Arab support to address the Iranian nuclear crisis. For those reasons, the Bush administration attempted to revive the peace process by the end of its second term through Annapolis but failed to make any breakthrough. Based on liberal hypotheses, a smaller segment of the two thirds interview partners attributed the Bush administration's changes to the departure of most of the neo-cons and to the personal influence of Condoleezza Rice. One interview partner utilized the constructivist explanation: the anti-American sentiments that emerged in Europe as a result of Bush's unilateralist policies which led to the isolation of the US, the collapse of supportive governments in Europe, and the departure of US troops from Iraq.

Similarly, when the Arab pundits were asked if the differences that emerged on the surface between the United States and Europe with respect to the Middle East were differences over the goals and interests or over the most appropriate methods (tools) or over both the goals and the tools, the statistical analysis showed that 6.5% viewed the transatlantic differences over the goals and the interests, 50% viewed them only over the most appropriate tools, and 43.5%

viewed the transatlantic differences over both the goals and the tools. Nevertheless, the general Arab trend contended that the genuine European American differences in the Middle East were mainly over the tools and never over the main strategic goals, such as protecting Israel's security, guaranteeing the secure supply of petroleum, and fighting terrorism and Islamic fundamentalism. This finding is derived from the interview partners' rationalizations for the three categories (aims 6.5%, tools 50%, and both 43.5%). The smaller proportion, 6.5%, supported the transatlantic divergence over aims, connoted principally to the transatlantic economic competition over Middle East markets and their different degrees of support for Israel.

In agreement with the dissertation's findings, half of the interview partners who supported the idea of transatlantic divergence over tools, attributed this to the widespread transatlantic interests in the Middle East: petroleum, Israel, Middle East stability, countering terrorism and weapons of mass destruction, and in general to be in command of the Middle East region. In a sense, the transatlantic crack over Iraq was not over getting rid of the Iraqi regime but rather over the proper instruments and the timing. Likewise in Iran, the transatlantic aim to thwart Iran from being a nuclear state was identical but the proper way, whether by isolation (US) or by diplomacy and negotiations (EU), was the separating component. 43% of the interview partners advocated that transatlantic divergences were over both tools and aims. Nevertheless, their justifications were more illuminating: In their opinion, the transatlantic divergences were mostly over tools rather than over the broader transatlantic aims in the Middle East. In a sense, their explanations revolved mainly around transatlantic economic competition, different historical experiences, different composite nature, different geographical proximity, differing dependency on the Middle East's petroleum, and Europe's fear of the American hegemony over the region. Therefore, the interview partners' overall approach was that transatlantic divergences were mainly over tools, albeit with some marginal divergences over aims as well as over economic competition and control of the markets.

As for the extent to which domestic political changes in the United States - specifically the change of the ruling party in the White House - affected US policies in the Middle East, 37% of the pundits contended that the change of the ruling party in the United States was an decisive factor in its policies towards the Middle East, whereas 63% contended that it was not. Unlike the dissertation's findings, the larger segment of the interview partners claimed the indecisiveness of the domestic change within the United States. The dissertation findings argued that the domestic

changes within the United States were significant. In a sense, the 2006 mid-term congressional elections with the triumph of the Democrats highly controlled the Bush administration's policies in the Middle East, whether in Iraq or Iran. In addition, the change from a Republican to a Democratic government caused fundamental changes in the US policy towards Middle East issues. However, the general Arab trend tended to argue that a domestic change in the United States between the Democratic and the Republican parties did not affect US policies in the Middle East. Even those who contended that the change of the ruling party in the United States was a decisive factor affirmed that it was only decisive for the way the issues were addressed and not for strategic orientations or long-term political goals in the Middle East.

Conversely, when the Arab pundits were asked to what extent domestic changes in the European states, particularly the changes of the main European governments, affected their respective policies towards the Middle East, 91.3% saw this as a decisive factor and only 8.7% viewed it as indecisive. Nevertheless, the 91.3% also emphasized that these changes had little or no effect on the Palestinian-Israeli conflict and Iran and that they were only decisive pertaining to the Iraqi crisis and to the nature of the European relationship with the United States. This conclusion matched the dissertation's findings that weighed the domestic changes in EU governments heavily for a further transatlantic convergence over most of Middle East issues, particularly towards Iraq.

The pundits attributed the main reasons behind the transatlantic rift that took place between the United States and some European states over the American decision to invade Iraq to both political and economic reasons. The political reasons ranged from Europe's fear of a tight US control over political decisions in the Middle East as well as the Middle East's economic resources and markets, to a split over the best methodology to address Iraq in light of the false accusations over WMD and the French and German petroleum interests in Iraq. As for the reasons for the split within Europe over the Iraqi war, the pundits attributed the reason of the proponents to the desire of the central and the Eastern European states along with some western European states such as Italy, Britain, Spain, and Netherland to attain a part of the economic Iraqi cake as well as their desire to maximize their influence within the European continent and on the global level. As for the flagrant alignment of the "new" European states with the United States, it was explained by the interests of these states to distance themselves from Russia, which meant by default getting closer to the United States and to NATO. In other words, the new

European states' stance in Iraq was a price they had to pay to prove their loyalty to the United States in order not to bear the costs of any American-Russian rapprochement in the future.

However, when the pundits were asked about the reasons for the transatlantic convergence in the aftermath of the Iraq war, the answers revolved mainly around the fact that the transatlantic rapprochement addresses an American desire – in Bush's second term - to restore the European political, financial, and militant support in Iraq as well as a European desire to attain a part of the economic Iraqi cake and to heal the rifts with the United States as an indispensable ally in the Middle East. Most of the Arab pundits agreed that the American-European differences over Iraq were mainly over the appropriate tools and methods rather than over the main strategic goals. There was even near unanimity among the Arab pundits that the European convergence with the United States in the aftermath of the war was mainly economically motivated while the American convergence with Europe after the war was mainly politically motivated.

Interview partners realist justifications of the transatlantic split over the Iraq war in 2003 revolved around the facts that Europe was anxious about an even bigger American hegemony that would obstruct its economic interests in Middle East. In addition, European intelligence agencies realized that the Bush administration's allegations against Iraq about possessing WMD were false and even fabricated. Moreover, the invasion of Iraq would have destabilized the entire Middle East and Europe would have been the principal loser due to its geographical proximity to the region. Nevertheless, the interview partners concentrated more on the economic interests of core Europe as an inspiring rationale behind their rebuff of the Iraq war and also referred to the division on European continent between Atlanticism and Europeanism. The largest parts of these explanations were in harmony with the dissertation's findings. Nonetheless, the dissertation findings were more wide-ranging and distinguished between the EU-US level and the US-EU member states level to indicate that each European big member state had its own reasons, whether in supporting or rebuffing the war, which went beyond the economic reasons.

The interview partners, based on liberal premises, maintained that the Bush administration embraced unilateralism whereas Core Europe invoked multilateralism. Yet, they gave no analysis to this transatlantic divergence. The dissertation's findings argued that this was because there was a value gap between Core Europe and the Bush administration concerning international system and international institutions owing to the neo-cons control over the Bush's

first administration. Also, the dissertation findings referred to another domestic reason for the French and German refusal to the war (utilizing the war refusal as an attractive card for both Schroder and Chirac to win their electoral campaigns). Unlike the dissertation's findings, constructivist explanations were not referred to by the interview partners. This was partially because the Arab pundits perceived the transatlantic values as common, identical, and for granted.

As for the Iranian nuclear crisis, most Arab pundits agreed that the transatlantic policies highly converged over the necessity of preventing Iran from becoming a nuclear power; albeit they differed over the best tools to address the Iranian crisis. Most of the interview partners perceived no fundamental transatlantic divergence over tools with respect to the Iranian crisis from 2002 until 2005. Conversely, the dissertation findings maintained that there was a clear-cut transatlantic divergence in those three years over Iran's nuclear crisis. For that reason, the EU refused to send the Iranian case to the Security Council, as the Bush administration has always sought, until the end of 2005. Most of the interview partners maintained that the transatlantic divergence over the proper tool concerning Iran was merely a sort of role distribution and that Europe was instructed by the United States' to negotiate Iran.

The dissertation's findings maintained that there were different transatlantic perceptions towards the Iranian regime that explained the transatlantic divergence over their tools of action with Tehran. For example, the Bush administration perceived the Indian regime as responsible and the Iranian regime as rogue, although India became nuclear outside of the NPT. Europe, on the other hand, perceived the Iranian regime as a regional power and that the reformists can be addressed. The interview partners did not perceive this distinction as a reason for divergence because they perceived both Europe and the United States as distributing roles between them in advance to handle the Iranian crisis.

The interview partners, used realist hypotheses, to illustrate the reasons behind the transatlantic convergence over the Iranian crisis since 2006. They gave the Israeli component the lion's share as a driving force behind the Western unification against Tehran because Iran's regional emergence as a nuclear power would cause a strategic misbalance against Israel and the Western interests. The dissertation's findings, on the other hand, mentioned other numerous reasons; the decline of the American soft and hard power, the increasing costs and dangers of a likely armed assault on Iran, the rise of a more confident and defiant Iran, and the augmentation

of the American quandary in Iraq and Afghanistan. The interview partners' consideration to the Israeli element and the Western refusal to the appearance of any regional power such as Iran is resulting primarily from their historical experience with the West; weakening both Mohamed Ali, Gamal Abd El Naaser's project in Egypt, and now Iran. Furthermore, the interview partners provided no liberal explanations for the transatlantic convergence over Iran. Conversely, the dissertation's findings referred to the change in the Bush's second administration staff (hawks) into more pragmatic figures as a significant rationale. It also referred to the deterioration of the Bush's reputation within the United States and the change of several European governments that sustained a more transatlantic convergence over Iran.

As for the nature of the relationship between the American and the European policies with regard to the Palestinian-Israeli conflict, half of the pundits viewed it as being in a full convergence, one-third as a mixture between convergence and divergence, 15.2% chose another answer (a full European subordination to the United States), and merely 2.2% viewed it as being in a full divergence. In the four groups of the interview partners, their realist explanations were in agreement with the dissertation's finding that the United States took the lead and Europe followed pertaining to the Palestinian-Israeli conflict, even though they had varied rationales. Most of the interview partners in the first three groups reached a conclusion that that Europe was an economic giant but a political dwarf primarily concerning the Palestinian-Israeli conflict. They also emphasized that Israel's security was a steady pillar to transatlantic convergence in the conflict. However, the mainstream of the interview partners made a distinction between the advanced declaratory policies of the EU towards the peace process and its genuine results on the grounds that were extremely humble. The largest segment of the interview partners acknowledged that Europe showed more consideration, more willingness to pay, take the Arab claims into account, lesser support to Israel than that of the United States, more flexibility and awareness to the conflict realities. Simultaneously, they asserted that Europe was unproductive, subordinated, and sometimes harmonizing with the American postures.

At variance with the dissertation findings that maintained that Europe has always suffered from the Israeli and the American disinclination to provide a genuine political role in the conflict, most of the interview partners championed the idea that Europe took the United States as an excuse for not taking concrete actions and that it only played a complementary and even an alleviating aspect to the American policies in the conflict. Nevertheless, the general trend of

the Arab perception was that the United States and Europe were much closer to convergence than divergence. In addition, the Arab pundits contended that the transatlantic convergence and the European subordination to the United States were more evident in the Palestinian-Israeli issue than any other issue in the Middle East. This was mainly attributed to the effect of the unifying and pressing Israeli factor on both the United States and Europe. In a sense, both the United States and Europe agreed on protecting Israel's existence and security, albeit with a different rationale and different tools. In other words, the powerful Israeli lobby in the United States plays a bigger role in pressuring the United States, whereas the Holocaust industry and accusations of anti-Semitism are used against any European state that tends to take a more balanced stance with respect to the Palestinian-Israeli conflict.

The pundits' answers concerning US-European stances on Hamas after 2006 on the 2008-2009 Gaza war illustrated the Arabic vision that viewed those as almost the same if not identical. The dissertation findings upheld that Europe wanted to deal with Hamas provided that it swore off violence and recognized Israel. Therefore, Europe desired to change Hamas' behavior. The Bush administration, on the other hand, aimed to overthrow the Hamas regime. Nonetheless, Europe finally matched the American stance. A large segment of the interview partners' explanations was consistent with this finding. They maintained that Europe had been more flexible about Hamas at the beginning; however eventually went along with the Bush administration due to American demands, Hamas's political stubbornness, and the pressure of numerous Arab regimes. The interview partners also perceived the Gaza war 2008-2009 as the time of greatest overlap of transatlantic positions regarding the Palestinian-Israeli conflict as well as an item in their common strategy to sustain Israel's dominance and to diminish Iranian and Syrian influence in the region. Unlike the dissertation's findings, the interview partners did not perceive that Europe was divided over the Gaza war between countries that supported Israel and those that denounced the war. This can be explained by the fact that the real European positions towards the Gaza war were useless. For that reason, European stances were perceived by the interview partners as identical with American stances because Europe followed the Bush administration in isolating Hamas and in adopting the West Bank first strategy intended for the most part to bring down the Hamas regime.

With the election of a new American administration in 2008, 87% of the Arab pundits contended that it would make the US-European relations more cooperative and more solid than

before, whereas 13% saw no effect on transatlantic relations. Despite being optimistic towards the Obama administration at the beginning of his term, most of the Arab pundits expressed their frustration regarding Obama's performance in the Middle East by the end of his first year in office. In other words, most of the Arab pundits argued that Obama retreated from addressing the Middle East issues objectively and that he would not be able to achieve what he promised in the Middle East in general and in the Palestinian-Israeli conflict in particular.

Most of the Arab pundits illustrated their doubts by referring to Obama's stance on the Israeli settlement activities, where he retreated from a complete stop of the Israeli settlement activities to an interim suspension and finally to refusing to link the resumption of negotiations and the Israeli settlement activities, as Israel had always desired. Generally, the interview partners perceived the performance of the American administrations, whether positively or negatively, according to how they addressed the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. The advanced positions of the Obama administration concerning the conflict; its aggressive engagement in the conflict and its claim that the resolution of the conflict was a top priority as well as a national American interest were highly welcomed by the interview partners. Yet, they expressed their disappointment that Obama administration failed to halt the Israeli settlements as it proclaimed. Most of the interview partners maintained that Obama's personal desire to resolve the conflict was clear. Yet, they realized that his administration was hindered by the opposition of the Netanyahu government to the peace process and by a Congress in favor of Israel.

Out of four Arab traditional views of the nature of relations between American and European policies in the Middle East, the Arab pundits preferred the third view (balance of interests) with 58.7%, then the fourth view (divided Europe) with 30.4%, then the first view (the transatlantic full convergence) with 28.3%; only 2.2% chose the second view (competition, meaning mostly economic competition). However, it can be concluded that the general Arab trend was that the transatlantic relations in the Middle East tended more towards a balance of interests with lots of convergences and little divergences in the context of the transatlantic strategic alliance and partnership. Also, Europe was a divided continent when it came to its Common Foreign and Security Policy, which meant that Europe mostly followed the American leadership in the Middle East, even if European countries diverged over the best tactics, tools, and courses of action. The reasons behind the four different Arab perceptions to transatlantic policies in Middle East are that transatlantic policies have never taken a steady or stable shape

and that they usually differ from case to case, from level to level, and even within the same case. Yet, all four views combined acknowledged that there was a broad transatlantic convergence over the strategic interests in the Middle East that surpassed the minor divergences. Economic and even political divergences between Europe and the United States usually were overcome for varied reasons: a divided and even subordinated Europe, a model of role distribution between the allies, or even a balance of interests where conciliation was founded on their relative power and their strategic need of each other.

Finally, a comparison between the Jordanian and the Egyptian experts proved that they were identical in their negative perception of the Bush administration's policies in the Middle East. Experts from both countries also criticized the subordinated role of the European Union to the United States. Only a small proportion of the Egyptians perceived a positive role of the European Union in the Middle East based on declared policies. Yet experts from both nations concluded that European policies were infertile on the real ground. The Jordanian interview partners put more stress on the subordinated nature of the European Union because they did not give much attention to the EU declaratory policies, as a small segment of the Egyptians did. The Egyptian experts perceived a manifest change in Bush's second term policies compared to the Jordanians. This is because most of the Egyptian interview partners concentrated on the change in Bush's policies towards Iraq and Iran rather than his rigid policies towards the Palestinian question, whereas most of the Jordanian interview partners focused more on the Palestinian-Israeli conflict. Notwithstanding, both groups argued that Bush's ideologies and strategies remained the same, and that any change was merely technical, deriving from the American military crises in both Iraq and Afghanistan. These crises were the chief driving force behind the rhetorical engagement of the second Bush administration in the Palestinian-Israeli conflict and its utilization of diplomacy in the Iranian dilemma.

Although both Egyptian and Jordanian experts put a different weight on the aims-tools dichotomy, both groups agreed that the transatlantic divergences over aims and interests were always momentary, on the surface, and vanished swiftly, and both confirmed that the crucial transatlantic interests in the Middle East were indisputably alike. Nevertheless, a small percentage of the Egyptian experts argued that the transatlantic aims and interests in the Middle East sometimes contradicted each other, but mainly over the respective economic share in the Middle East markets. This is why there were differences between the Jordanian and the Egyptian

interview partners over the aims category. Both the Jordanian and the Egyptian pundits argued that a change of the ruling party in the United States affected only the techniques of its Middle Eastern policies rather than the strategic orientations. Both groups perceived the transatlantic partners largely in full convergence in the Israeli-Palestinian conflict; the Jordanians saw a full convergence with a leading role of the United States and a complementary or subordinated role of Europe. The Obama administration was received positively by both the Egyptian and the Jordanian experts in its effect on the transatlantic relationship. However, both groups had their reservations about the Obama administration's performance with regard to the Palestinian-Israeli conflict. Finally, both the Jordanian and the Egyptian experts chose the "balance of interests" version as the most fitting model of the state of transatlantic policies in the Middle East.

A comparison between the Arab perspective and the western perspective towards the transatlantic policies in the Middle East might be useful in this respect. First, while almost all the Arab pundits perceived the Bush administration's policies as extremely negative and imperial, particularly towards the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, they did not catch the fact that George W. Bush was the first American President to clearly recognize the two-state solution and that Bush denounced the Israeli settlement activities, even if he later retreated under the pressure of the Congress and the Israeli lobby. The Arab pundits ignored this fact because they saw Bush's overall policy in the Middle East as aggressive, colonial, and anti-Muslim and Arabs and interpreted any positive actions he took in a cynical way.

Second, while the Arabs perceived Europe as entirely subordinated to the United States in all Middle East issues and even saw some marginal divergences with the United States as divergences within a strong alliance and primarily over the tools and not over the strategic goals, the western perception maintained that there were genuine divergences over the appropriate tools, particularly regarding Iraq and Iran. In a sense, Europeans believed that they achieved a breakthrough with respect to the Iranian crisis because they refused to send the case to the Security Council until 2006 and struck two accords with Iran before they converged with the United States starting in 2006. Likewise, Europeans believed the Iraq crisis constituted the worst ever split in the transatlantic relations to the extent that some pundits saw the end of the Western alliance. Although transatlantic allies converged later on, there was a genuine transatlantic rift over Iraq.

Third, the Arab pundits argued that Europe did nothing in the Palestinian-Israeli conflict but produce declarations and announcements, such as Venice declaration, whereas the western perception argued that Europe accomplished numerous achievements, such as preventing the Palestinian Authority from collapsing, pushing for the creation of the Quartet and the Road Map, financing the Peace Process substantially, pushing the United States to robustly engage in the conflict in return for its support in Iraq and Afghanistan, and playing a political and a security role in the conflict for the first time through the Quartet and the two ESDP missions. The Arab perception ignored these facts because the results of the European actions on the ground were negative and ineffective. However, some Arab pundits argued that Europe made some valid attempts to affect and even to change the American policies in the Middle East.

Fourth, the western perception argued that the constant dual American and Israeli reluctance to give Europe any tangible role in the conflict was the main reason behind the European ineffectiveness in the conflict, whereas the Arab perception added an extra reason - Arab weakness, since Arabs did not use their cards against Europe in order to take more effective actions in the Palestinian-Israeli conflict. In addition, the Arab pundits gave more weight to the Israeli factor in the transatlantic convergence over the Palestinian-Israeli conflict because both the United States and Europe agreed on protecting Israel's existence and security. At the same time, Israel pressured both the United States and Europe, albeit in different degrees and with different tools. Fifthly, both the Arab and the western perceptions agreed that the pattern of US leadership and Europe's following in the Palestinian-Israeli conflict was an appropriate description. However, they diverged over the explanations of this pattern. The Arabs attributed this to the fact that the western camp's aims and goals concentrated on dismantling the Arab nation and empowering the western-Israeli project in the region, whereas Europeans argued that the aim was to empower Europe to have a bigger political and economic role in the conflict and that getting along with the United States was the price that should be paid by Europe (Bold Strategy). In addition, some Arab perceptions held that Europe was happy to be subordinated to the United States in the Palestinian-Israeli conflict, whereas most of the western writers were unhappy and lamented they were ineffective and even sought a bigger European role as well as to amend the American policies in the conflict.

Sixth, the Arabic perspective argued that the United States and Europe totally converged over isolating Hamas because both sought to eradicate the radical Islam in the region and to

prolong the Palestinian crisis by arguing that the Palestinian side and not Israel was the responsible for the impasse in the peace process; the western perception argued that Europe sought to change the Hamas's behavior and the United States sought to topple Hamas's regime. The Arabs also argued that Europe converged with the United States over Hamas only after Hamas refused the Quartet's conditions and that Europe was willing to engage with Hamas if it complied with these conditions. Therefore, Europe converged with the United States in its strategy of the West Bank first only because of the radical nature of Hamas.

Seventh, the general Arab perspective matched the western perspective with respect to the difference between the first administration and the second Bush administrations. Both argued that the Bush administrations neither changed their strategic thinking nor their general goals, but instead changed their tactics, tone, and language to adapt to their malfunction in its two wars in Iraq and Afghanistan. The general Arab perspective also matched the western perception that the actual transatlantic divergences in the Middle East were principally over the tools and never over the main strategic goals, such as protecting Israel's security, guaranteeing the secure supply of petroleum, and fighting terrorism. Surprisingly, 43.5% of the Arab pundits argued that there was a transatlantic divergence also over both the aims and interests and tools but their explanation was directed only towards the transatlantic economic competition over the markets of the Middle East and never over the main strategic goals. Eighth, although the Arab pundits agreed with the western perception that Obama would reinforce the transatlantic relations in the Middle East and were even highly receptive to his policies, they turned out to be skeptical about his ability to initiate change, particularly in the Palestinian-Israeli conflict. Finally, while the western perception argued that there were convergences and divergences in the transatlantic policies in the Middle East, the Arab pundits concluded that transatlantic policies were more convergent than divergent in a strong transatlantic alliance.

By testing the thesis's two main premises, the first argument - that the transatlantic differences concerning the Middle East are in details (tools), but not in the essence of policies - was being supported by the three case studies. In a sense, in Iraq the transatlantic divergence was principally over tools (EU diplomacy, invading Iraq under the auspices of the United Nations, and giving more time to the inspection team, against a US unilateral military attack) but never over the goal (ousting a dictator regime). In Iran, the transatlantic divergence was also principally over the tools (the US preferred isolation, sanctions, and regime change while the EU

preferred negotiations, diplomacy, and economic incentives) but never over the goal (preventing a nuclear Iran). In the Palestinian-Israeli conflict, although the pattern of the US leadership and EU following dominated and the goal was to solve the conflict, the approaches were divergent (US democracy first and then conflict resolution later, whereas the EU maintained that solving the conflict would solve all the other crises in the Middle East). The second argument - transatlantic allies' convergences regarding the Middle East make their policies more coherent - was also verified by the three case studies. Convergence of their policies in Iraq, Europe and the United States turned out to be more coherent, such as sending troops and training the Iraqi police; in addition, a role distribution materialized between Europe and the United States and Europe even legitimized the US existence in Iraq through the UNSC resolutions. When Europe and the United States converged in Iran, they managed to pass the UNSC resolutions of sanctions against Iran despite of the Russian and the Chinese resistance. When Europe and the United States converged over Hamas in the Palestinian-Israeli conflict, they adopted the same strategy of West Bank first and distributed their roles to empower the Palestinian Authority against Hamas.

In conclusion, transatlantic policies regarding Middle East issues diverge mainly over the appropriate tools of actions. In Iraq, it was over the utility of diplomacy versus unilateral military power. In Iran, it was over the utility of engagement and economic incentives versus isolation and regime change. In Palestine, it was over the appropriate approach, whether democracy first or solving the essence of the conflict first. Transatlantic policies regarding Middle East issues converge mainly due to numerous neo-realistic, neo-liberalist, and constructivist rationales that differ in each case study. However, the nature of the transatlantic divergence or convergence in the Middle East is fluctuating and variable, depending on the American strategic orientations, the European strategic orientations, and the actual political changes in the Middle East.

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Academics:

- 1- Prof.Dr. Ali El Dein Helal (Professor of Political Science at Cairo University-Faculty of Economics and Political Science, prominent figure at the Ruling Party (the National Democratic Party), a former minister of Youth, and a member of the Egyptian Council for Foreign Relations), Interview, Cairo, March 1, 2009.
- 2- Prof.Dr. Mohamed El Sayed Selim (Professor of Political Science and international relations at Cairo University- Faculty of Economics and Political Science, and currently a visiting professor at El Kuwait University), Interview, Cairo, August 16, 2009.
- 3- Prof.Dr. Mustafa Elwy (Professor of Political Science and international relations at Cairo University- Faculty of Economics and Political Science, the head of the department of Political Science at the Faculty of Economics and Political Science, and a member of the Egyptian Council for Foreign Relations), Interview, Cairo, August 20, 2009.
- 4- Prof.Dr. Hasan Nafaa (Professor of Political Science at Cairo University- Faculty of Economics and Political Science, former head of the department of political science, former general secretariat of the Arab intellectual forum in Jordan, a prominent opponent figure in Egypt, and a member of the Egyptian Council for Foreign Relations), Interview, Cairo, August 30, 2009.
- 5- Dr. Manar El Shorbagy (Professor of Political Science at the American University in Egypt and a specialist in American studies), Interview, Cairo, August 16, 2009.
- 6- Gehad Oda (Professor of Political Science at Helwan University, head of the Department of Political Science at the Faculty of Commerce in Helwan University, A figure at the National Democratic party (the ruling party), and a member of the Egyptian Council for Foreign Relations), Interview, Cairo, July 18, 2009.
- 7- Prof.Dr. Abd El Moneem El Mashaat (Professor of International relations., and dean of the Political Science department at the Future University), Interview, Cairo, July 6, 2009.
- 8- Prof.Dr. Mohamed Kamal (Professor of International at the Faculty of Economics and Political Science Cairo University, a member in the Shoura Council (the second legislative branch in Egypt), a prominent figure at the Ruling Party, and a head of the Youth Committee at the Ruling party and the head of political socialization general secretary), Interview, Cairo, October 10, 2009.
- 9- Dr. Motaz Abd El Fatah (Professor of Political Science at the Chicago University in US), Interview, Cairo,

Journalists:

- 10- Dr. Gamal Abd El Gawad (Head of the Center of the Strategic and Political Studies in El Ahram Newspaper, former Senior researcher and a former head of the International relations Unit at the Center of the Strategic and Political Studies), Interview, Cairo, August 5, 2009.
- 11- Abd El Azeem Hamaad (The Editor-in-Chief of El Shorouk daily Newspaper { an independent newspaper }), Interview, Cairo, September 2, 2009.
- 12- Tarek Hassan (The Editor-in-Chief of El Ahram El Messai daily Newspaper {a national newspaper}), Interview, Cairo, July 20, 2009.

- 13- Dr. Saed El Lawendy (A prominent journalist in El Ahram Newspaper, a specialist in transatlantic relations and the Middle East, and a member of the Egyptian Council for Foreign Relations), Interview, Cairo, July 18, 2009.
- 14- Atef El Gamery (Prominent journalist in El Ahram Newspaper, and a member of the Egyptian Council for Foreign Relations), Interview, Cairo, September 5, 2009.

Politicians:

- 15- Prof.Dr. Mohamed Abd Ela (Head of the committee of foreign affairs at the NDP (the ruling Party), a former head of the committee of foreign affairs at the Egyptian People's Assembly, a former head of Alexandria University, and a Professor of International relations), Interview, Cairo, August 16, 2009.
- 16- Dr. Refaat Al Saeed (Head of El Tagamoh Party {an opposition party}), Interview, Cairo, August 4, 2009.
- 17- Nabil Zaky (General Secretariat for political affairs in El Tagamoh Party {an opposition party}), Interview, Cairo, August 4, 2009.
- 18- Dr. Osama El Gazaly Harb (Head of El Gabha El Democratya Party {an opposition party} and Editor-in-Chief of Al Syassa Al Dawlya Review), Interview, Cairo, September 1, 2010.
- 19- Mahmud Abazza (Head of Al Wafd Party {a major opposition party}), Interview, Cairo, September 5, 2009..
- 20- Dr. Mustafa El Feqy (Prominent political figure at the NDP, head of the Committee of Foreign Affairs at the People's Assembly, and a former diplomat in Europe), Interview, Cairo, September 27, 2009.
- 21- Mohamed Basyony (Prominent political figure at the NDP, head of the Committee of Foreign Affairs at the Shoura Council, and a former ambassador in Israel), Interview, Cairo, September 29, 2009.

Diplomats:

- 22- Nabil Fahmey (Former ambassador at the United States from 2000 until 2009, and a member of the Egyptian Council of foreign affairs), Interview, Cairo, July 21, 2009.
- 23- Abdel Raouf El Reedy (Former ambassador at the United States, head of the Egyptian Council of Foreign Affairs), Interview, Cairo, August 5, 2009.
- 24- Mohamed Gamal Bayoumi (Secretary General of the General secretariat of Egyptian European Association Agreement, and a former ambassador in Europe), Interview, Cairo, August 4, 2009.
- 25- Mohamed El Oraby (Former ambassador in Germany and currently the minister of foreign affairs' assistant), Interview, Cairo, December 15, 2009.
- 26- El Sayed Ameen Shalaby (Executive director of the Egyptian Council of Foreign Affairs), Interview, Cairo, August 11, 2009.

Interviews in Jordon

Academics:

- 1- Prof.Dr. Sami Al Kazendar (Professor of Political Science- the Hashemite University, and the General Director of the Academic Center for Political Studies), Interview, Amman, January 17, 2010.
- 2- Prof.Dr. Adnaan Hayagnaa (Professor of Political Science-the Hashemite University, and the dean of the faculty of Sciences and Arts), Interview, Amman, January 18, 2010.
- 3- Prof.Dr. Hisham Ghassib (Professor of Political Science, and the President of Princess Sumaya University for Technology), Interview, Amman, January 19, 2010.

- 4- Prof.Dr. Ahmed Saed Nufaal (Professor of Political Science- Yarmouk University), Interview, Amman, January 20, 2010.
- 5- Dr. Walled Abu Dalbuh (Professor of Political Science, and expert in Strategic and Security Issues- Faculty of International Studies- University of Jordan), Interview, Amman, January 14, 2010.
- 6- Dr. Zaid Eyadaat (Professor of Political Science- faculty of International Studies- University of Jordan), Interview, Amman, January 14, 2010.
- 7- Prof.Dr. Abdullah El Noqrashy (Professor of Political Science, dean of the faculty of International Studies- University of Jordan), Interview, Amman, January 14, 2010.
- 8- Prof.Dr. Gazy Rababaa (Professor of Political Science and specialist in the Palestinian issues - University of Jordan), Interview, Amman, January 16, 2010.

Politicians

- 9- Adnaan Abu Odaa (Former head of the Jordan Royal Balaat, former Minister of Culture, and a member of the International Crises Committee), Interview, Amman, January 15, 2010.
- 10- Hussein Megally (Former head of the Lawyer Syndicate, former member of the Parliament, and the head of the Legal Committee in the Jordan Parliament), Interview, Amman, January 23, 2010.
- 11- Mohamed Abu Hudeb (Former head of Committee of International Relations in the Jordanian Parliament, and currently the head of the International Affairs and Security in the Arab Parliament), Interview, Amman, January 20, 2010.

Journalists

- 12- Sood Qubylat (Head of the Jordanian Writers Associate), Interview, Amman, January 17, 2010.
- 13- Amer El Taal (Journalist and a daily writer in Al Dostoor Newspaper {An Independent and Daily Newspaper}), Interview, Amman, January 16, 2010.
- 14- Hazem Ayaad (Journalist and a daily writer in Assabeel Newspaper {An Islamic Newspaper}), Interview, Amman, January 18, 2010.
- 15- Mwafaq Mahadeen (Journalist and a daily writer in Al Araby El Youm {an independent and daily Newspaper}), Interview, Amman, January 19, 2010.
- 16- Hussein El Rawashdaa (Journalist and a daily writer with Islamic Attitude in Al Dostoor Newspaper {An Independent and Daily Newspaper}), Interview, Amman, January 23, 2010.
- 17- Dr. Mohamed El Massry (Head of the Opinion Unit at the Center for Strategic and Political Studies- University of Jordan), Interview, Amman, January 24, 2010.
- 18- Mustafa Hamarnaa (Editor-in-Chief of El Sabeel Magazine {a Weekly Political Magazine}), Interview, Amman, January 23, 2010.
- 19- Moafaq Mahaaden (a daily columnist in El Araby El Youm newspaper {an independent newspaper}), Interview, Amman, January 19, 2010.

Diplomats:

- 20- Ambassador. Hassan Abu Nehmea (former ambassador, head of the Center for Dialogue among Religions , and head of the Regional Center for Humanitarian Security), Interview, Amman, January 19, 2010.

Appendix:

PhD Student: Mohamed Metawe

Thesis's title: Middle East Issues In Transatlantic Relations: 2003-2009.

Supervisor: Professor Martin Thunert

Heidelberg University- Heidelberg Center for American Studies- Germany

The Researcher is an Assistant lecturer at Cairo University- Faculty of Economics and Political Science, and a PhD student at Heidelberg University. I strictly confirm that these interviews are (only) for scientific purposes. The goal of the research project is to explain why transatlantic policies converge or diverge regarding the Middle East issues. Two major chapters of my study are devoted to examine the Arabic view of the transatlantic policies regarding the Middle East through interviewing the Arab experts, intellectuals (and policy-makers?) in two countries (Egypt and Jordan). This includes conducting interviews with academics, journalists, government officials, and party officials.

Pledge1:

You have the right to stay anonymous and the researcher promises to keep the data that are collected to himself and even to destroy the transcripts after making use of them in the research process.

Pledge 2:

The researcher confirms that this project has no affiliation to any government and is not commissioned by any media outlet, publisher or think tank or party. The research is conducted independently with a PhD project in Political Science / American Studies at the University of Heidelberg, Germany. The funding of the research is a scholarship from the University of Heidelberg.

Please note:

For further questions you may contact my supervisor at the University of Heidelberg, Professor Thunert.

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This questionnaire for Arab experts, academics, intellectuals and policy-makers seeks to analyze the relationship between the United States' policies and the European states policies towards Middle East issues- wither these policies were collective (Political Statements) or national policies, particularly the big European states' policies such as Germany, France, Britain, Italy, and Spain, Poland towards the issues of Iraq, Iran, the Palestinian-Israeli conflict. It aspires to investigate the Arabic governmental and academic positions and perceptions of the transatlantic policies towards these three issues in the period from 2003 to 2009.

Interview Questions:

General Questions:

- 1- How do you perceive the United States' policies towards Middle East issues (Iraq- Iran- the Palestinian-Israeli conflict) in the period from 2003 to 2009?
- 2- How do you perceive the collective European policies (EU) towards the same Middle East issues (Iraq- Iran- the Palestinian-Israeli conflict) in the period from 2003 to 2009?
- 3- There seems to be a noticeable difference between the EU's collective foreign policy statements on the one hand and the national policies of individual EU member states towards these Middle East issues (Iraq- Iran- the Palestinian-Israeli conflict) on the other, during the period from 2003 to 2009. Do you see a difference and if so, how do you explain this difference?
- 4- How do you perceive the overall relationship between the American and European policies towards the Middle East? Please distinguish, if necessary, between the EU level and the level of the larger European Union member states such as France, Germany, Britain, Italy, Spain, and Poland towards the Middle East issues in the period from 2003 to 2009? Do you recognize
 - (a) full transatlantic/European policy convergence on Middle East issues

- (b) Divergence of transatlantic/European policies on Middle East issues
- (c) A mixture between convergence and divergence
- (d) Another kind of relationship

5- If your answer was (a) convergence, what are the manifestations of convergence? And what are the reasons and drivers for convergence?

- If your answer was (b) [divergence], what are the manifestations? And what are the reasons and drivers for divergence?

- If your answer was (c) [a mixture between convergence and divergence], what are the manifestations? And what are the reasons and drivers?

- If you saw another kind of relationship, please explain why and how it manifests itself?

6 - From your point of view, was there a difference in American-European relations between the first term of President G.W. Bush [2001-2005] and the second Bush term [2005-2009] in treating the European Union?, Was there also a difference between President Bush's two terms regarding the Middle East issues (Iraq- Iran- the Palestinian-Israeli conflict)?

8- If your answer that there was a difference between term 1 and term 2 what are the manifestations and what were the reasons?

9- If there were differences on Middle East issues between the United States and EU/EU members states what was the character of these differences?

Were they differences over policy goals, national interests, and problem perceptions or "technical differences" over the problem-solving tools? Please explain your answer.

10- From your point of view, is the ruling party (the party to which the President belongs) in the United States a driving force in the United States' policies towards the Middle East or are there other forces? If so, which are they? Please explain.

11- From your point of view, were the changes of some governments in Europe between 2003 and 2009 (e.g. in Spain, Germany, Italy, France etc.) a driving force in the policies of these states towards Middle East issues (Iraq- Iran- the Palestinian-Israeli conflict) or did these changes have little or no effect? Did these changes of governments affect the convergence or the divergence of the transatlantic partners in this period or not?

Specific questions:

Iraq

- 1- How can you explain the rift that took place between some European countries and the US on the decision to invade Iraq?
- 2- How can you explain the rift that took place within the European countries on the decision to invade Iraq?
- 3- How do explain the American-European convergence, particularly between France and Germany on the hand, and the United States on the other hand, in period after 2005 over Iraq?
- 4- Was this seeming transatlantic convergence – in the post-Iraq war period after 2005 – a real/full convergence or were/are there still major differences?

Iran

- 1- Why were American positions- during the Bush era- regarding the Iran nuclear issue converging with the European positions (on both the EU level and on big member states' level) on this issue, even though the United States and European countries/EU have different approaches towards so-called “rogue states” (EU preferring dialogue, the US preferring containment and isolation and even regime change?)
- 2- Why did the United States allow for a bigger role for the EU and EU member states such as Britain, France and Germany in the Iranian nuclear issue in contrast to the decision-making process in the Iraq case?

Palestinian-Israeli conflict

- 1- How do you perceive the relationship between American policies and European policies towards the Palestinian-Israeli conflict in the period 2003-2009: are they convergent or divergent or a combination thereof? Please explain.
- 2- After Hamas had won the majority of the legislative branch in the parliamentary elections and formed a Palestinian government, both the United States and the EU refused to deal with Hamas. How can you explain this transatlantic convergence?
- 3- In the Israeli attack on the Gaza strip- that started in late of December 2008 and ended in late January 2009- a transatlantic convergence was noted and was obvious in the Security Council mandate 1860. How can you explain this convergence?

A new American administration led by Barack Obama 2009

- 1- By a new American administration- led by Barack Obama with a different vision – will it make a more transatlantic convergence towards the Middle East or not? Why?
- 2- When Barack Obama took over in the beginning of 2009, he declared a decision to pull out of Iraq, hold a dialogue with Tehran, and refresh the peace process. How can you see this on the transatlantic relations?

Classification of the Arab views about the transatlantic relations

There are four major views that analyze the transatlantic policies towards the Middle East issues:

- 1- A complete transatlantic convergence: presumes that both the United States and Europe (individually and collectively) have the same goals and objectives in the Middle East and that the only difference is mainly on their style. Therefore, this vision expect that the transatlantic relationship is increasingly heading for more cooperation in the Middle East and that what really happens is nothing but a sort of rules distribution between the two poles.
- 2- European American competition: initially assumes that there are genuine divergences and competition between Europe and the United States in the Middle East. Therefore, it expects that the transatlantic policies in the Middle East are conflicting rather than being cooperative and that the Arabs can make use of the transatlantic divergences in the region to achieve some political gains.
- 3- European American balance of interests: initially assumes that the transatlantic relationship is very complex, multi-dimensional, and even encompasses aspects of both cooperation and conflict at the same time.
- 4- A Divide Europe: suggests that there is no a unified European stance in the Middle East in order to put Europe as a one entity in face of the United States. It also denotes that what is called ‘a unified European stance’ is nothing but political statements and announcements that have never been put into practice. Instead, the national political positions of each European state are more significant.

To which view you belong? Why?